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THOMAS WHITTAKER,

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WINHAM-ARNOLD N.Y.

Winifred;

OR,

"AFTER MANY DAYS."

BY

LUCY ELLEN GUERNSEY,

AUTHOR OF "IRISH AMY," "LADY BETTY'S GOVERNESS," "SCHOOL-GIRL'S TREASURY," ETC., ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE reigns of Charles the Second and his unfortunate brother are certainly among the darkest pages of English history. There probably was never a time in England when vice was more rampant and unblushing, or morality at a much lower ebb among courtiers and placemen of every name; yet I believe whoever takes the manners of the court as a fair sample of those of the kingdom will make a great mistake — as great as that of certain modern American writers who talk of a small number of frivolous city ladies as if they represented the whole body of American women. The truth seems to be that even in the court itself were to be found some shining instances of virtue

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both among men and women; and that among the body of the people were many devout Christians seems to be proved by the great number and ready sale of books inculcating the most exalted purity and spirituality. It is this bright side of the picture that I have attempted to display in the following pages. Should they prove acceptable, I may follow them with others illustrative of different points of English history.

L. E. G.

WINIFRED:

A STORY OF MONMOUTH'S REBELLION

CHAPTER I.

JACK'S GHOST.

IT was nearly two months after the battle of Sedgemoor, which was fought on the 6th of July, 1685, between the forces of James the Second, King of England, and those of the Duke of Monmouth, his illegitimate nephew, who laid claim to the crown. Monmouth was without the shadow of right upon his side, and was utterly unsupported, save by a few political exiles and adventurers as reckless as himself. He had hoped that as soon as he landed the gentry of the western counties would flock to his standard, but in this he was mistaken. Nobody joined him but the country people, and a few prominent dissenters who were

misled by their hatred of popery and their dread and dislike of the reigning king.

After some weeks of aimless marching and counter-marching, of foolish proclamations and senseless quarrels among themselves, the forces of Monmouth encountered those of King James upon Sedgemoor, not far from Bridgewater in Somersetshire, and were utterly defeated, though most of his raw, undisciplined troops behaved with the greatest bravery, resisting to the very last, even after they were abandoned by their leader. Monmouth fled, but was soon taken, carried to London, tried, and executed.

No one could blame King James for putting Monmouth to death. He had been guilty of high treason in taking up arms against the government, and had justly forfeited his life; but nothing could excuse the barbarous cruelty exercised toward his followers, almost all of whom were simple country people, who had been influenced chiefly by personal attachment to the duke. In Somersetshire alone two hundred and thirty persons were put to death. Their bodies hung in chains, or their heads and mangled corpses, hoisted upon poles, poisoned the air of every market-place and village-green in the county. One poor half-idiot, who had been long

supported by charity, was treated in this way ; and two aged women, one in Hampshire and one in London, were sentenced to be burned alive, merely for sheltering and assisting with food and money some of the wretched fugitives. Both were persons of the best character, noted for their piety and their active benevolence. By the urgent intercession of certain of the king's own party, the sentence of Alice Lisle was changed from burning to beheading ; but Elizabeth Gaunt perished in the flames, meeting her death with a patience and courage worthy of an ancient Christian martyr.

At the time when my story commences, Master David Evans lived near a little hamlet called Holford, about nine or ten miles from Bridgewater. He was a yeoman, that is to say, he farmed his own land, which had belonged to his family for several generations. Master Evans had received more education than most of his neighbors, even those of higher rank than himself, and possessed what in that time and place was esteemed quite a library, that is to say, he had besides his great Bible and Prayer-book, "The Whole Duty of Man," Fox's "Martyrs," and a couple of odd volumes of Hackluyt's "Voyages." He was not rich, for his land was none of the best, and scientific farming was un-

known in those days ; but he had always enough and to spare, and no poor person applying to him for help was sent empty away. His principal profits were derived from his orchards and cider presses, for which then as now Somersetshire was famous, and from the horses he raised for the London market. His elder son had been apprenticed to a shipwright in Bristol, and was now in business for himself. The younger was captain of a fine vessel sailing from the same port, while his wife Magdalen lived with her father-in-law, kept his house, and attended to the dairy and poultry yard.

Magdalen belonged to a good Devonshire family, which had sent more than one confessor to the rack and the stake in the time of Queen Mary, and had borne a good share in the naval exploits by which the men of Devon rendered themselves famous during the next glorious reign. Magdalen herself was a woman of a grave and earnest spirit, scrupulously exact in the performance of all daily duties, kind and considerate to those about her, and thoroughly imbued with that spirit of religious devotion which had sustained her great-grandmother amid the fires of Smithfield. She had two children. Jack was a sturdy boy of twelve, with a

great aptitude for fishing, birds'-nesting, and riding on horseback, and an equal disinclination for learning of any sort, together with a marvellous capacity for tearing his clothes, blackening his eyes, and getting into scrapes generally. Winifred was nearly three years older, and very much resembled her mother, both in mind and person.

Master Evans had been in no way concerned in the Rebellion. He was not given to politics at any time, and he looked upon the Duke of Monmouth's adventure with equal dislike and contempt. He was a constant and devout church-goer, and even his great high-tory neighbor, Sir Edward Peckham, could find no other fault with him than that he dispensed his charities to churchman and dissenter alike, which however was equally true of the vicar of the parish and the Bishop of Bath and Wells, the learned and excellent Doctor Ken.

But it did not follow of course that Master Evans was in no danger during the bloody proscription which followed the battle of Sedgemoor. A great many persons as innocent as himself had been put to death by the monster Jeffreys and the almost equally wicked soldiers Kirke and Faversham. He could not go to the parish church on Sunday without seeing over the porch the ghastly head of his

kind old neighbor and friend Master Oldmixon, who had been hung for no other crime than that of having been in Bridgewater bargaining for the sale of his cheese on the day before the battle, and taking off his hat to the Duke of Monmouth as he passed by. Another neighbor had sold eggs and cider to certain of the duke's officers, and for this offence he was hung in chains at his own house-door. But Master Evans had thus far escaped persecution, and as he was not rich enough to excite the covetousness of the king's officers, he began to hope he should go entirely free.

It was about two weeks after the conclusion of the Bloody Assizes, as they have ever since been called, that Jack Evans was going across the field with a basket in his hand, containing some meal, a large piece of cheese, and sundry other provisions which his mother had sent him to carry to a poor widow. Old Dame Sprat lived in a hovel on the edge of a waste, swampy plain, partly overgrown with bushes and reeds, and to reach her hut it was necessary to pass through a certain thicket, called the Black Copse, which bore no good name. Strange sounds had been heard, and strange lights seen glancing among the trees; nay, it was solemnly declared that the place was haunted by a

black horse without a head, which spoke with a human voice. All country people were superstitious at that time, and Jack was no wiser than his neighbors in this respect, while the terrible incidents and horrible sights of the last few weeks had filled the country with ghost stories. However, his mother had commanded, and there was nothing for it but to obey. The afternoon was warm and sunny, and the hazel-nuts were ripening in the hedges ; and besides, Jack, who was really a kind-hearted boy, pitied the poor lonely old woman who had no one to care for her. So he went along cheerily enough, sometimes whistling, sometimes singing an old ballad or some sea-song which he had learned from his father. He was passing through his grandfather's barley field, and had nearly reached the stile at the further end, when he noticed with surprise that two or three of the barley sheaves had fallen down, and were lying partly unbound and scattered upon the ground.

"Who has done that?" said he to himself. "I wonder if the gypsies have been turning their asses into the field again? However, the sheaves must not be left like that, for I think it is coming on to rain, and they will all be spoiled."

So saying, he put down his basket and set him-

self seriously to the business of restoring the fallen barley to its place. It was not an easy task to accomplish alone, but Jack was both strong and skilful for a boy of his age, and he knew how important it was that not a grain of this precious barley should be lost: so he persevered, and at last succeeded in putting matters to rights.

He was just fastening the band of the last sheaf, when he heard a sound which made him spring to his feet, with hair bristling and eyes almost starting from his head. It was a deep groan, as of a person in great distress. He listened, trembling in every limb. Presently he heard it again, and then a faint, hollow voice, speaking, as it were, out of the ground.

"My good lad!" it said.

Jack waited to hear no more. If truth must be told, he was at all times an arrant coward, and the horrible events of the summer had made him afraid of his own shadow. He thought no more of basket, barley, or Widow Sprat. Terror lent him wings, and he never paused to look round or breathe till he burst into the kitchen, where his mother and grandfather were sitting, and fell flat on the floor. It was some time before he could speak so as to be understood, and then he told a

terrible tale of groans, and voices speaking out of the ground, of clattering hoofs pursuing him, and a white spectre as tall as a chimney which waved its arms over his head. He could give no account of the basket, and he declared, in his distress, that he would not go to the Black Copse again, no, not if they killed him. Indeed it was plain enough that to send him back would be to endanger his reason if not his life.

"I cannot tell what to do!" said Dame Magdalen, very much perplexed. "Your grandfather is ill with rheumatism, and the men are all away. My ankle is so lame with the sprain I got yesterday, that I can hardly make shift to go about house, and Jenny and Prissey would either of them be as bad as Jack himself. I fear the poor old dame will suffer for want of food."

Both the maids declared that they could not and would not go near the Black Copse that night for all the world; and Jenny added, "Not for King Monmouth himself, God bless him!"

"Hush, fool!" said Master Evans, sternly "There is more danger in one such speech as that than in all the ghosts in Somersetshire. Let me never hear the name of that unhappy man spoken under my roof!"

Jenny was careful to put the dairy door between herself and her master before she muttered that King Monmouth would come to his own yet, in spite of them all.

"As for you, Jack, you had better take your supper, and then go to bed and sleep off your fright, which I dare say has not taken away your appetite," said Master Evans. "I do not know what you will do, Magdalen. I fear the poor woman must go supperless to bed."

"I will carry the basket to Dame Sprat!" said Winifred, who had sat all this time in the chimney-corner without speaking a word.

"You, Winifred!" said her mother, surprised. "But will you not be afraid?"

"No, mother, I do not think there is any danger," replied Winifred.

"Oh, you are wondrous brave, Miss Winifred!" said Jack, not very well pleased. "Just wait till you hear the headless horse speaking to you—that's all!"

"It would be so strange to hear a horse speak at all, that I do not think his not having a head would make much difference," replied Winifred, slyly. "Are you sure it was a horse which followed

WINHAM - ARNOLD N.Y.

you, Jack, or did you only hear the clattering of your own shoes?"

Jack muttered something about girls thinking they knew more than any one else, and followed Jenny into the dairy, that he might enlarge upon his adventure to a more credulous listener.

"Then you do not believe in Jack's goblins, Winifred?"

"No, mother. I have noticed before that when Jack is frightened he can never see anything as it really is. I suppose the ghost was the old dead tree in the copse, which he has seen a hundred times before, and the groans he heard were the creaking of the branches, or perhaps the old red cow who is always grumbling to herself. I remember when I had the fever how the dame sat up with me and told me tales all night when I could not sleep, and how she made cool drinks for me, and baskets of rushes. I always thought I should like to do something for her in return."

"But if you should meet any of the soldiers, Winifred?"

"There are no soldiers in the neighborhood now, mother," said Winifred. "Dame Hodges has just come from Bridgewater this morning, whither she has been to see her poor son, and she tells me the

soldiers have all gone away to some other place, with the chief-justice. She went to bid poor Simeon farewell, but she was not allowed even to see him."

"Lord have mercy on him, poor creature!" said Dame Evans. "He had hardly sense to tell his right hand from his left. I do not believe he even knew upon which side he was fighting. But, daughter, if you are frightened, what will you do? It is a long way from any house."

"I will say my prayers or sing a psalm, mother," replied Winifred, simply. "I think I ought to go," she added. "I think it would be but right. None of us have been near the dame for some days, and she may be starving."

"Give her the basket and let her go, Magdalen," said the old man. "She has the spirit of thy great-grandmother the martyr. May the blessing of God go with thee, child!" he added, laying his hand upon her head. "I will trust Him to bring thee safe back again; but make no further delay, for it is waxing late, and the days are shorter than they were."

"And, Winifred, you may take this bottle of milk for the old dame, and give a look for the

other basket as you pass the white elm. It will doubtless be standing somewhere about."

Winifred was soon on her way with her bottle and a second basket well filled. It may seem strange that she was so ready to undertake the task, but Winifred Evans was no common child. She came of a race of heroes and confessors, and it seemed as if she had inherited her character from them. Quiet and retiring as she ordinarily was, hardly ever speaking unless when spoken to, and preferring her book or her own thoughts to any kind of play, she was never known to show a particle of fear. Gentle, patient, and ever ready to yield to the wishes and opinions of others, in matters where right and wrong were concerned she was inflexible. Winifred's library was not a large one. There was no Sunday-school library in those times with its weekly supply of story-books—no magazine or illustrated newspaper. Her books were few, and those of a character which I fear would hardly attract many of my young readers. Her favorite volumes were the Bible, the "Book of Martyrs," and an odd volume of Mr. Edmund Spenser's "Fairy Queen," which her father had bought for her in Bristol; besides which she read aloud now and then to Mrs. Alwright in Hall's "Chron-

icle" and Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia" But the very fact that Winifred had access to so few books made her prize more dearly and study more attentively those she had. Over the first of these especially she pondered for hours in the intervals of her daily tasks, strengthening her spirit and feeding her imagination with the glorious truths of the one and the beautiful tales of heroism and virtue in the others. In other circumstances she might have become a mere luxurious dreamer and castle-builder, living in a world of her own fancies, to the neglect of real duties; but no such result was possible under the sensible and energetic training of Dame Magdalen Evans. Ever since Winifred had been able to run alone, she had had a regular round of daily duties laid upon her, for the performance of which she had been held strictly accountable. The chickens must be fed, the eggs collected, the daily task of spinning and knitting duly performed; and the little girl was taught to hallow these daily and commonplace toils by a spirit of religious consecration.

Dame Magdalen early made her daughter her assistant in those works of charity and mercy which were the delight of her own heart, and Winifred was at all times a welcome visitor in the cottages

of their poor neighbors, who looked upon her as a kind of saint. She shrank from no toil, however disagreeable, which would benefit others, and she sometimes undertook tasks from which elder people shrank in dismay. It was she who first gained access to Dame Oldmixon, as she sat alone in her darkened cottage, distracted with grief and terror after the horrible death of her husband, and at first by tears and caresses, and then by whispered prayers and verses of Scripture, had quieted the poor creature and persuaded her to take some food and try to sleep. It was she who by long and careful searching had recovered little Willie Higgins' silver sixpence, just as the child had given up the quest in despair, and was going home to the whipping he was pretty certain to receive. It was Winifred who penetrated to the awful presence of Sir Edward Peckham himself, to beg off the herd-boy who was about to be sent to jail for robbing the heron's nest of eggs and feathers; in which enterprise she succeeded so well that she not only saved the lad from punishment, but was presented with a new silver piece by Sir Edward himself, and regaled with sweetmeats by my lady, besides obtaining the inestimate privilege of coming twice in every week, and sometimes oftener, to take les-

sons in fine work and confectionery of Lady Peckham's waiting gentlewoman, Mistress Alwright. Finally, it was Winifred who read the delinquent herd-boy such a lecture on the enormity of his guilt in robbing the herons, that he blubbered over it for an hour, and promised never again to take what did not belong to him. This very day she had been to visit poor Dame Hodges in her affliction, and had thus heard the news of the departure of the soldiers from Bridgewater.

Winifred walked briskly along, now watching the rooks, which were beginning to return to their nests in Holford Avenue, and the robin redbreasts in the hedges; now musing upon something she had read, or repeating aloud her favorite verses and ballads. As she drew near the place where the dead elm stood white and gaunt in the copse, she began to look about for the basket which Jack had left behind in his terror. Presently she espied it not far from a tall, upright stone near the dead tree I have mentioned. This stone stood close to the edge of the copse, amid a number of similar ones which had fallen across each other in wild confusion, and which were believed to have once formed part of some old heathen temple. The ruin, if such it was, was nearly overgrown with rank

weeds and brambles, and was looked upon with peculiar disfavor by the country folks, as being the favorite haunt of the headless steed before mentioned.

"Why, there is the basket!" said Winifred, surprised. "I would not have believed Jack would go so near the standing stones alone for all the blackberries in Somersetshire."

She went to the place, and as she stooped to take up the basket, she heard distinctly the same sound which had scared Jack—a faint, hollow groan.

"Jack did hear something, after all!" was her first thought. "It is some poor creature who has been wounded, and is perhaps starving!" was her second thought. She looked carefully around, and seeing nobody near, she said in a low voice, "Who is here?"

Another fainter groan was the only reply. Winifred drew nearer. Stretched upon the ground, in a little hollow among the fallen stones, lay a young gentleman—so Winifred judged him to be by his dress—apparently just at the point of death. His once gay doublet was soiled and ragged, his eyes were sunken and closed, and there was a half-healed scar upon his cheek. Winifred spoke to

him, but there was no answer except a deep, tremulous sigh.

Winifred was not long in deciding what to do. She put down her burden and raised the poor gentleman's head upon her lap. She then moistened his lips with milk from the bottle, and with great difficulty forced a few drops into his mouth. In a few moments the sick man opened his eyes

"Who is this?" he asked, faintly.

"A friend!" answered Winifred, who was now moistening some bits of bread with milk. "Try to swallow this."

The poor sufferer eagerly took the food offered him, and presently was able to sit up and feed himself.

"May God bless you, my maid!" said he. "I thought all was over with me, but I seem already to feel new strength. I believe you have saved my life. How did you find me out?"

Winifred related the story of Jack's adventure. The gentleman smiled faintly.

"It was I who frightened your brother and robbed him of his basket as well," said he. "I had managed to crawl to the barley field in the hope of carrying off a little straw to add to my bedding, when I was surprised by his approach,

and shrank behind the sheaves. At that moment I felt such a deadly faintness and hunger come over me, that I could not resist the impulse to call upon him for aid—an impulse I bitterly regretted when I saw how frightened he was. I expected no less than that he would bring back a crowd with him, and crept to my hiding-place, carrying the basket with me. I was, however, too far exhausted to profit by its contents, and I believe should soon have died but for your timely aid. I have been hiding in this den for a week, in all which time I have eaten nothing but wild fruits and berries and the remains of a loaf which a poor woman gave me. But, my maid, can you tell me what has become of the Duke of Monmouth?"

"He and my Lord Grey were taken alive, and carried to London," replied Winifred. "We do not know what is become of them, but I heard my Lady Peckham say they would doubtless be put to death."

"Aye, doubtless!" said the stranger, with much bitterness. "He has fallen into hands which know not mercy. Are the soldiers of the king still in the neighborhood?"

"They have mostly gone from Bridgewater," replied Winifred; "though there are still a few

scattered about the country—too many for any of the duke's men to be safe."

"I see you have guessed my secret," the stranger began, but Winifred interrupted him.

"I think, if you please, sir, you had better not tell me who you are, and then if any one questions me I shall have nothing to say."

"You are a wise little maid. You will never betray me, I am sure!"

"Never!" said Winifred, firmly. "They should sooner cut off my head. But I must tell my mother and grandfather. You need have no fear," she added, seeing his countenance change at her words. "They are good Christian people, and would never betray a poor wanderer. I must tell them, that we may know what to do for your relief and escape. I will leave you the cheese and part of the loaf, but I must go now, or my mother will be frightened at my stay."

As Winifred walked away, her head was fuller than ever of serious thoughts. She knew that the deed she had just done was one which might bring destruction not only upon herself but her whole family, if ever it were known that she had helped one of Monmouth's men. She had heard, like every one else, of Lady Alice Lisle, who had been

put to death for no other offence than that of giving food and shelter to the two fugitives Hickes and Nelthorpe. She had heard from Mrs. Alwright of little Miss Linwood, only ten years old, who was a member of the girls' school which had presented the Duke of Monmouth with a standard at Tawton. The poor child knew nothing of what she was about, and only did as she was bid ; nevertheless she was thrown into jail, and only released to die of jail fever, after her father and uncle had paid for her a fine of twelve hundred pounds, a great part of which sum, it was said, went to fill the purses of the queen's maids of honor.

All these and many other things made Winifred shudder at the thought of what she had done, and yet she did not see how she could possibly have acted in any other way. She felt that she could no more have gone away and left the poor gentleman to die, than she could have killed him with her own hands. Nay, it would have been murder in the sight of God—Winifred was sure of it. No, she could not have done otherwise ! There was no use in speculating about that. The only course which now remained was to tell her mother and grandfather, with all secrecy, what she had done, and leave them to act as they saw best.

Another thing troubled her. She had given away at least half Dame Sprat's bread and milk. True, there still remained enough for the old woman's supper and breakfast, but she would at once see that the loaf had been broken, and what would Winifred say? She had passed the dreaded Black Copse, and reached the widow's door before she had quite made up her mind.

Poor old Dame Sprat lived alone in a hovel, which in this country would hardly be thought good enough for a cow-house. Her husband and children were dead, her property had all been lost in the civil wars and the times which followed them, and she had now no dependence for her daily bread, save the kindness of her neighbors and the faithfulness of that God whom she loved. She had been the wife of an Independent preacher, who was an elderly man at the breaking out of the civil wars. Nevertheless, his age did not prevent him from acting as chaplain to one of Cromwell's regiments and following its fortunes till just before the Restoration, when he died, full of years and honors. After his death evil days came upon his widow. She was turned out of the farm upon which her husband's family had lived for many generations, her furniture and goods were wasted and scattered,

and herself driven from one place to another till she found a refuge in her present abode. She was now a very aged woman, more than a hundred years old, having been born in the days when Queen Elizabeth sat upon the throne of England: and many a tale had she told Winifred of those stirring times of conquest and adventure, and of the sad and sorrowful days which had followed under the Stuarts.

She now sat by the little window of her hut, with her great Bible, almost the only remaining relic of her wealth, on a rude table before her. Her eyes had failed a good deal during the last few years, but she was still able to follow the sacred text by the help of her spectacles. Indeed she was so well acquainted with its contents that she hardly needed the book.

"Welcome, my child!" said she, as Winifred appeared. "It is long since you have gladdened my eyes. I began to be troubled lest some misfortune had befallen you."

"I should have been here yesterday, but my mother has sprained her ankle and needed me at home," replied Winifred. "She sends you this basket and a bottle of new milk; but, dame," she added, hesitating, "all is not there that mother

sent. I have given away part of your bread and milk, but I cannot tell to whom."

"Aye, aye!" said the old dame, nodding her head, sagaciously: "I see how it is! Some poor soul fleeing as a bird from the fowlers. But oh, my dear child, be careful! These are evil times, in which he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey."

"I know!" said Winifred. "But will you give me two or three apples, dame? I see yours are ripe."

"Yes, sweetheart, surely. Take what you please. Here, wait a moment." The old woman hobbled to the place where her bed stood, and after some searching, drew forth an old checked blanket or coverlet.

"I shall not need this, these warm nights," said she; "but if any poor body were hiding in the fields, it might be a great comfort to him."

Winifred could not help being terrified when she saw that the dame had so quickly understood her secret. What if others should penetrate it as easily? Dame Sprat saw her trouble and guessed its cause.

"Have no fear, my maid," she said. "I have lived in troublous times before, and well do I know

the ways of the outcast and the wanderer. I am an old woman, and my summons may come at any hour. What then should I gain by betraying any poor creature? I would gladly give such an one shelter under my poor roof if it were thought safe for him."

"I am sure you are very good!" said Winifred: "I must tell the whole to my mother and see what she will say; and now good-night, dame. I must be going, for it grows late, but I will try to come again to-morrow."

Winifred soon reached the standing stones, and first looking carefully around to see that she was not observed, she gave a low signal. The stranger peeped out of the burrow he had made for himself among the fallen masses.

"Have you come so soon again, my little friend?" said he.

"I am on my way home," replied Winifred. "I have brought you some apples and this blanket but I must not stay."

"Wait only one moment," said the stranger. He searched in his bosom as he spoke, and produced a very small parcel, wrapped in soft leather, and a watch and seals, such as gentlemen wore in those days. "Do you know my Lady Peckham at

the Hall?" he asked; "I think you mentioned her name."

"O yes," replied Winifred. "She has been very kind to me, and I go to the Hall twice a week, and sometimes oftener, to take lessons in fine work and other matters of Mrs. Alwright, my lady's gentlewoman."

"Ah, poor Alwright! is she still with my lady? Many a saucy trick have I played upon her," said the stranger, smiling. "Well, sweetheart, you may carry this parcel and the watch to my lady, and tell her—no, you need tell her nothing. She will understand. But as you value my life, let no one see the packet. Can you put it into Lady Peckham's hands in private?"

"I think I can," replied Winifred, after a moment's consideration. "I think I see the way to manage it. Good-night, sir."

CHAPTER II.

THE MIDNIGHT WALK.

"YOU are late, my daughter," said her mother, who stood at the door watching for her. "The sun has set and the dew is beginning to fall heavily. What has kept you so long?"

"I could not help it, mother," replied Winifred.

"I suppose you stayed to order the dame's house and cook her supper for her," continued her mother. "I like to have you do all you can for the poor body, for she is a good woman, and old and helpless withal; but it is not well to be out after sunset, now that the dews are so heavy, and besides it is not safe in these troublous times. But you were late in setting out, and it is something of a walk to the cottage. Come now and have your supper. Priscy has kept a bit of apple pie for you, and you shall have some clotted cream, for a treat

So put away your basket, and sit down by the fire, for you look pale and chilly."

Winifred ate her supper in silence, and then sat still by the fire, thinking how she should contrive to tell her mother of her adventure. She knew it was time for her to go to bed, but still she lingered, watching Dame Magdalen and the maids as they bustled about, finishing up the work and making things tidy for the night. At last her mother noticed her as she sat in the corner of the wide chimney.

"Come, child, why do you sit here?" said she, hastily. "You should have been in bed an hour ago."

"I should like to sit up as long as you do, to-night, mother."

"Why, what has come over the child!" said her mother. "I should think you would be ready for your bed, after such a walk: and you are looking pale still!" she added. "Did anything frighten you, Winifred?"

"No, mother, but I should like to sit up to-night."

"Well, have thy way for once!" said her mother. "It is not often you take a fancy, I will say that for you. See now, I have finished all, and the maids are gone to bed. I will take my knitting

and sit down by the fire, and you shall tell me a tale from your favorite book."

Winifred had another sort of tale to tell, but she delayed it till her mother was seated at her knitting. It was nothing unusual for Dame Magdalen to sit down by the fire with her wheel or her stocking after all the rest were gone to bed. It was thus she gained time for quiet thought over the events of the day, for disentangling domestic perplexities, and for those devotional musings which were meat and drink to her thirsty soul. Winifred saw that all the doors were shut, and then drew close to her mother's side.

"Mother," said she, "I have found out what frightened Jack."

"Aye!" said her mother: "then there really was something the matter?"

"Matter enough, though there was no ghost in the case," said Winifred, and she proceeded to relate, in the lowest tones, the history of her adventure. "I knew it was dangerous, mother," she concluded; "but what else could I do? I am certain he would have died if I had gone away and left him. Was I wrong?" she asked, anxiously, as she received no answer from Dame Magdalen, who had dropped her knitting and sat looking at

the fire. "Should I have gone on my way and left the poor gentleman to perish?"

"No, child! God forbid!" exclaimed the mother, hastily. "You acted like a Christian, but it is a sad shame, and I cannot tell what to do. I must waken your grandfather and tell him the story, for the barley will be carted to-morrow, and then all may be discovered."

"You do not think any of the men or maids would betray the stranger, do you, mother?" asked Winifred.

"I cannot tell, child. I trust not, but the times are evil, and terror makes people mean and treacherous. God forgive the rulers who put such temptations in the way of simple folk like us."

"I should like to go to the American colonies, where my father was last year," said Winifred. "There is no king there, they say, and the people are all of one mind."

"They have their own troubles—what with the savages and the wild beasts, the sickness, and the hard, cold winter," said her mother. "Aye, and they have their own dissensions and quarrels too, and will doubtless have more as their numbers increase. You would not like to leave my lady at the Hall, and the parish church, and all the places you have

known since you were born, for those wild hills and waters. There are trials and temptations in all lands and in all stations ; and since it is God who sends them or permits them, He will doubtless give us grace to bear them. But I must awaken your grandfather, and then we will take counsel together upon this poor gentleman's case."

"He is not asleep," said Winifred ; "I hear him stirring."

"What is all this talking?" asked Master Evans, putting his head out of the room next the kitchen, in which he slept. "Cannot Winifred find time to tell her fairy tales by daylight? It is time for simple folks like us to be abed and asleep, and you know to-morrow will be a busy day."

"It is no fairy tale that the poor maid has to tell this time," replied Dame Magdalen. "Will you come to the fire, grandfather, that we may take counsel together?"

Master Evans closed his door, and presently came out, wrapped in the Indian gown which his son had brought him from the East. He sat down and listened with earnest attention, while Winifred again related her story.

"The child is uneasy, lest she should have done wrong in bringing this danger upon us," said Mag-

dalen, when the tale was finished ; but, in truth, I see not what else she could have done."

"Nor I," said Master Evans. "She did no more than her duty ; I must say I wish it had chanced otherwise, but it is God's will, and doubtless for the best. Where has this gallant been ever since the battle ?"

"As far as I made out, he has been hiding among the poor people—fishers and gypsies and such like—till he should find himself fit to travel ; but he was too weak to talk a great deal, and I thought best not to question him."

"Right ! You are sure no one saw you, Winifred ?"

"Quite sure, grandfather. You know one can see far around from the standing stones, and not a creature was in sight. But Dame Sprat guessed at once that something was the matter. She gave me one of her blankets, which she said would keep some poor creature warm. She told me she should be glad to shelter such an one if it were thought safe for him : and I have been thinking, grandfather "——

"Well, say on, child," said Master Evans, as Winifred hesitated ; "thy thoughts are mostly to the purpose."

"I think, grandfather, that since she is willing, Dame Sprat's cottage is the best place for the stranger. You know she has no visitors but ourselves, and it is a lonely place, where there are no passers-by. The dame has a small out-house where she keeps her turf and fagots. The gentleman might hide there during the day, and if pursuit came, he could flee into the waste, where he would have a much better chance of escape than where he is now. When I go to carry the dame's meal and milk, I would carry enough for both, and no one need be the wiser."

"The plan seems a good one," said Master Evans, after some consideration. "No place could be found more solitary, and the dame is as true as steel, and a wise woman besides. But who will be his guide to the cottage, and when? The barley must be carried to-morrow, if the day be at all fair, and I have bid the men be in the field by daylight. There seems to be no time."

"I will guide him," said Winifred, "and to night. The moon is almost full, and there are no clouds. I will wrap myself in my gray cloak, and steal along by the hedge. No one will be abroad, and if any one should chance to see me, he will take me for a fairy," she added, smiling. "Then,

to-morrow I can go up to the Hall as usual, to take my lesson of Mrs. Alwright. My lady always walks in the maze before dinner, and I can wait and speak to her there. I know the way. I have been there before to gather the rose leaves and violets for Mrs. Alwright, and if any of the servants see me, they will think me about some such business."

"The child is too wise for her years!" said Magdalen. "But, my dear one, I cannot have thee abroad in the lonesome fields at night, and with a stranger whom no one knows."

"I think there is no danger, mother; at least not so much as in leaving the matter till to-morrow. Nobody would harm a child like me, especially when she came to do him a service."

"Alas, poor child! you know little of the wickedness of this world. I could find it in my heart to wish you should never know more than now!"

"And besides, dear mother," continued Winifred, in a low and reverent tone, "I have prayed to God to take care of me: and then I opened my Bible and read this verse: 'Yea, the darkness is no darkness to Thee, but the night is as clear as the day: the darkness and the light to Thee are both alike.' So then I thought God can take care

of me as well when I am alone in the fields as when I am asleep in my bed ; for all places are alike to Him : and why then should I fear, since I am abroad upon His work, and an errand of mercy ?"

"True," said her grandfather ; "I see where thy courage comes from. She is right, Magdalen ! Whatever is to be done, must be done this night, or not at all. The harvesters will be in the fields by daylight, and some of the lads will be daring each other to gather sloes at the standing stones. Even thinking of naught but our own safety, it is the wisest course, for it will bring destruction upon us all if the poor gentleman be found there, and it becomes known, as it will, that he has had food from us. I have a shrewd guess as to who he may be, but I say nothing."

"Go then, my daughter, and may thy God and the God of thy fathers go with thee," said her mother. "Since it is His will that thou shouldst run into danger, I do trust He will bring thee safe out of it."

Winifred was soon wrapped up in her warm gray cloak, and with her basket well filled a second time, and with certain other matters tied up in a bundle, she set out on her lonely walk. Magdalen watched her from the door till she could no longer

see the little gray figure, and then with a heavy heart she went back to the kitchen, and sat down to await her daughter's return, and to pray that she might be kept from all the dangers of the way.

The time passed slowly enough to the two people sitting by the fireside, and more than once did Magdalen bitterly repent having allowed her daughter to go upon such an errand. Again and again she thought of all the perils to which the child might be exposed, whether from pixies and goblins (for Magdalen was by no means above the superstitions of her time), or from the king's soldiers, or even the stranger himself. There were but few words spoken. Magdalen was never given to very much expression, and any strong emotion was apt to shut her up within herself; and Master Evans seemed wrapped up in his own meditations.

At last the patter of the little feet was heard upon the stones of the paved court outside the kitchen door. Magdalen could hardly give the child time to tell her story, so anxious was she to put her into a warm bed, and dose her with the hot spiced elder wine which she had kept simmering among the ashes. Winifred had succeeded perfectly. She found the gentleman asleep, and had with some difficulty aroused him, and made him under-

stand her errand. He had objected at first, she said, for fear of bringing trouble upon them all, but when she had made him comprehend the true state of the case, he had gone with her, slowly and with a good deal of difficulty (for he was stiff and very lame), to the widow's cottage. Dame Sprat was easily aroused, and opened her door at once. She knew the stranger directly, and called him Master Arthur.

"Aye, aye, I thought as much!" said the farmer, nodding; "but least said soonest mended. Go on, my child."

"That is all," said Winifred, simply. "Dame Sprat welcomed him like a lady in her own hall She would fain have had him take her bed, but he would not hear of that. He wrapped himself up in the dame's old duffel cloak and was asleep in a moment in her great chair. Then I left the basket and came home as fast as I could. I heard the church clock strike twelve as I came over the stile by our orchard, and oh, it was so cold!" said Winifred, shivering.

"Yes, I fear you are chilled through and through! I trust you have not caught your death!" said her mother. "Come now, and let me put you to bed at once."

The warmed bed and the hot spiced drink soon threw off the chill, and in half an hour Winifred was sleeping as sweetly as though she had gone to bed with the chickens, as usual.

CHAPTER III.

MY LADY.

WINNIE is lazy, this morning," said Jack, as he sat down to his breakfast of bread and milk in the kitchen. "It is almost six, and she is not down yet."

"No," replied his mother; "Winnie is not lazy but tired, and not very well. She was awake late last night, and I thought she had better sleep awhile this morning."

"Yes, there is always some good reason for everything that Winnie does!" said Jack, peevishly. "I wish I could always do just right, as she does!"

"I wish you could," said his mother; "but that is not the way to begin."

Jack murmured something about favorites, which, however he was very careful not to let his mother hear, and went on eating his breakfast with

a very discontented face. The truth was, he was a good deal ashamed of his fright the evening before, and he felt vexed at Winifred for doing the errand he had been afraid to perform. Jack knew that he was a coward, and he was ashamed of his cowardice, but instead of letting his shame lead him to the amendment of his fault, he permitted it to make him jealous of every one who was braver than himself, and especially of Winnie, who, being a girl, had, he opined, no business to go where he was afraid to venture.

"I don't care!" he said to himself. "I will do something which shall show them that I am not afraid. I will climb up to the magpie's nest and bring down a pair of the young ones to tame. Winnie dare not do that, I know. I can teach the young magpies all sorts of things—even to speak, I dare say, and then I can sell one of them at the fair."

The magpie's nest which Jack intended to rob was built in the top of a very high old tree, which stood not far from the farm-house. The tree had been long dead, and the branches were as dry as tinder; a fact of which the cunning magpie was doubtless well aware when she built her nest in the highest fork. A tame magpie is fully as entertaining as a parrot, and Jack, with whom bird's-nesting

was a kind of passion, often cast longing eyes upon the nest in question. His grandfather, however, had forbidden him to go near it, not from any particular tenderness to the birds, but because the tree was such dangerous climbing.

It was nearly eight o'clock when Winifred opened her eyes with a start, and saw her mother standing by her bedside.

"Did I frighten you?" asked her mother.

"No, mother—I was dreaming. I thought the soldiers had come!" replied Winifred. "Is it not very late?" she added, looking at the sun and starting up in alarm.

"Almost eight o'clock!" replied her mother "I have let you sleep as long as I dared; but you know you have to go to the Hall to-day. You will have no more than time to dress yourself neatly and eat your breakfast. Do not forget the packet for my lady."

There was no great danger of Winifred's forgetting it. She had slept with it under her pillow, and a dozen times during the night she had gone over the matter in her dreams, with all sorts of absurd and frightful incidents attached thereto. Now she was telling the secret to Lady Peckham, at the parish church, in service time, while the vicar

stopped his sermon and all the congregation turned around to listen. Now she was in the street of Bridgewater, on a market day, irresistibly impelled to tell every one she met that the Duke of Monmouth was hiding in Lady Peckham's closet; and again, she found herself at the water-side in Bristol, whither she had once gone to meet her father, and all the bells of the place were ringing at once: "Tell my Lady Peckham! Tell my Lady Peckham!"

But if Winifred's dreams had been disturbed and confused, her waking thoughts were composed and collected. She had already settled her plan of operations, by the time she was dressed. She knew that Lady Peckham was exceedingly regular in all her habits, having exactly appointed hours for her devotional reading and prayers, for attending to her household concerns, for her still-room, where she and Mrs. Alwright prepared medicines and cordials for the sick, and perfumes and confections for the well; for her embroidery, and for walking in the maze or on the terrace. It was at this latter time that Winifred intended to address her. She was soon on her way to the Hall, with her little work-basket on her arm, and the precious watch and packet carefully secured in her bosom, to take her lesson in cut-work or carpet-work of

Mrs. Alwright, my lady's gentlewoman. As Winifred walked along by the hedgerow or under the orchard trees, bending to the earth with their load of fruit, she sang in a sweet voice good Bishop Ken's beautiful morning hymn :

> "Awake, my soul, and with the sun,
> Thy daily course of duty run!
> Shake off dull sloth, and early rise
> To pay thy morning sacrifice."

"How beautiful it must be to be able to write such fine hymns as the good bishop!" thought Winifred. "And yet his heart must often be sad, when he sees so much evil which he cannot help. They say he shed tears when he pleaded with the chief-justice, and even with the king himself, for the poor prisoners, and all to no purpose. No, I should not like to be in his place, or in that of any other great person, especially in these sad times. I am sure my lady and Sir Edward often look troubled and distressed, and Dame Sprat says the great Queen Elizabeth died of a broken heart for all the trouble she saw coming on the country she loved so well, and which she could do nothing to hinder. No, I should not like to be any great person. It is as much as I can manage, and more, to do my duty in that state of life to which it has

pleased God to call me. But then I suppose if God puts people in high places, He will give them grace to do their duty there also, if they ask Him for it, as much as to grandfather or to me. He gives to every one according to his need. Dame Sprat told me that she has often heard her mother tell how, in Queen Mary's days, even young lads like William Huntington went to their death singing and praising God ; and they say when Dame Gaunt was bound the other day in London, she was calm as though she were going to her night's rest. I am afraid I never could be like that." And Winifred shuddered at the thought of being brought before the terrible chief-justice, whose face and voice overcame even the boldest men, and had actually scared to death a young lady at the assizes in Tawton not long before. It must be remembered that this was no mere fancy on her part, such as girls sometimes like to scare themselves withal. It was an event likely enough to happen, if she were found out in helping or concealing any follower of the Duke of Monmouth.

"But why should I fear?" she continued. "If God means any such trial for me, why should I doubt that He will give me strength and grace to bear it, and take me safely through? Even if I

should lose my life, the pain will be but short, and then comes heaven, which will never, never end, where I shall see all the saints and angels, the holy martyrs who have died for the truth, and our blessed Lord Himself."

Winifred's fears were gone—lost in the thoughts which now came crowding upon her. Thoughts of her heavenly home—speculations as to what it would be like, and what would be her employment there. She often dwelt upon these realities of another world, as other girls dwell upon their air-built castles, reading over and over the last chapters of the Revelation, and everything she could find in the Bible relating to her future state, till the mansions of her Father's house in heaven seemed as real to her as the gray thatched farm-house in which her days had been spent, or the old Elizabethan Hall whither she was going, and than which she had never seen anything finer. She was so absorbed in her own reflections that the mile and a half between the farm and the Hall were quickly passed over, and she almost started to find herself at the park gate.

Holford Hall was a quaint old red brick pile, all angles, and gables, and projecting turrets, and clustered chimneys, with a stately terrace and a

long elm-tree avenue where the rooks built, year after year. Sir Edward had often called it barbarous and antiquated, and wished he could build it over in more modern style, but fortunately he had never been able to command money enough for such an undertaking, and so the old Hall remained as it had come down from the days of Elizabeth. Sir Edward was a man of more cultivation and reading than many country gentlemen of his day. He read the "Sylvia," and corresponded with its accomplished author, Mr. Evelyn, and he took great pride in the stately evergreens, formal clipped yews, and brilliant flower-gardens which surrounded the Hall; and not without reason, for in those days it was no uncommon thing for a gentleman's country house to have all the litter of farm and stable-yard directly under its windows, while the only garden consisted of a few gooseberry bushes and pot-herbs, and perhaps some knots of common flowers, all mingled higgledy-piggledy, and growing as best they could. Winifred tripped along the terrace and across the paved court, stopping for a moment to caress the old bloodhound, who knocked his tail against the flagstones at her approach, too lazy for any more active greeting;

and entered the little ground-floor parlor which was Mrs. Alwright's peculiar sanctuary.

Mrs. Alwright received her little friend with her usual dignified kindness. She was a tall, thin, rather severe-looking person, very neat and prim in her dress, and more stately in her manners than my lady herself. You must not think she was at all like an ordinary waiting-woman of these days, though she dressed her lady's hair and took care of her clothes. She was of a good family and respectfully educated for those times, and her brother was vicar of the parish of Holford. Such persons in those days thought it no disgrace to take service with ladies of higher rank, and were often treated with a great deal of consideration. Mrs. Alwright was older than her lady, and had been brought up by her mother, the old Lady Carew, who was a famous manager and housekeeper. She understood all sorts of work, plain and ornamental, and every kind of household duty, from pickling beef and pork to making the most delicate confectionery. She had taken a great fancy to Winifred from the first of their acquaintance, and she intended that the child should be thoroughly taught everything she herself knew.

Winifred usually enjoyed very much the hours

she passed by Mrs. Alwright's side in the housekeeper's room, working at her embroidery or her knitting, as the case might be. She knew that the privilege was a very great one, such as few girls in her station enjoyed; and she was anxious to make the most of her time, lest something should happen to interrupt these precious hours. Moreover, she was very fond of good Mrs. Alwright, and loved to please her; and she usually gained great commendation for her industry and attention. To-day, however, she was so absent-minded and set so many stitches awry in the fine cut-work band she was making, that Mrs. Alwright thought it necessary to give her a little lecture on her carelessness.

"But I am sure you are not well!" was the sudden conclusion of her discourse. "You are as white as a lily, and have dark marks under your eyes. You shall lay aside your work for the present, and have a glass of my rose cordial or a dose of my lady's sovereign balm, and a piece of gingerbread or saffron cake, and when you have rested, you shall read to me out of Hall's 'Chronicle.' I have kept the mark in the book where you left off last time."

Winifred had no objection to the cordial, fragrant with rose-leaves and spices, but she could not help

an inward shudder at the thought of my lady's balm, even if it were to be followed by a liberal slice of Mrs. Alwright's excellent gingerbread, stuffed with citron and almonds. She had helped at the distilling of that balm, and had a lively recollection of the double handful of red earth-worms and the six woodlice which went into the still, along with the herbs and drugs, the flour of coral and amber, the spice and flowers, which went to make up the medicine. She earnestly assured Mrs. Alwright that she was not at all ill, only somewhat tired from having taken a long walk the day before, and added that she was sure the rose cordial would do her good, especially if she might go and walk in the garden awhile. Mrs. Alwright bustled about to procure these refreshments, and looked on with great satisfaction while Winifred sipped the fragrant medicine, declaring that she looked better already.

"And, Winifred, as you say, it will do you good to be in the air; so you may take my little basket, and gather all the rose-hips which you can find in the maze. I am going to make some conserve for my brother's cough, and you shall help me prepare it. 'Tis a most sovereign thing for a cold and cough, as you will do well to remember."

Winifred could not repress an expression of thankfulness when she found her way so smoothed before her. She had half filled her basket with the red shining rose-berries, or hips, as they are called, and began to fear that Lady Peckham was not coming out to-day, when she saw her patroness approaching, and stood still, dropping her little courtesy as she drew near.

Lady Peckham was a woman past fifty years old, but still possessing the remains of great beauty, though she was thin and worn, and her face wore an expression of sadness—that kind of sadness which has grown so habitual as to become a part of the character itself. She had been first married at seventeen, to a distant cousin of her own. It was a marriage of affection, and one not altogether favored by her parents, for they were stanch loyalists, and had suffered greatly in the royal cause, while Captain Winthrop was a rising young officer in the army of the Commonwealth. But Lord Carew was "out at elbows" in money matters, and not in good odor with the dominant party, and the countenance and assistance of the young Colonel of Ironsides were not to be despised. For a few years Margaret Winthrop's life had been a happy dream checkered only by fears for her husband,

and by the hardly concealed displeasure of her parents, whom, however, she seldom saw ; for Lord Carew had found it expedient to leave his estates in Devonshire and reside in a remote corner of Wales, where his wife possessed a small property. Then the dream was rudely broken! Margaret's young husband died suddenly, leaving his still younger wife penniless. The great Protector passed away, and was succeeded by his feeble son, who soon gave way to Charles the Second. The royal party came into power, and used their power with an unsparing hand. Lord Carew came back to his estates, and was able to offer his widowed daughter a refuge, which she had no choice but to accept.

Lady Carew, Margaret's mother, was a bustling active woman, a wonderful manager and housekeeper, a famous disciplinarian, and a violent churchwoman of the political stamp. Withal she was kind-hearted and charitable, and benevolently anxious to make people happy, provided always that they were willing to be made happy exactly in her way, but exceedingly averse to allowing them any choice in the matter. Above all, she was a strenuous and successful match-maker, and was reputed to have brought together more couples than

any one else in the county ; albeit it was said that her matrimonial mixtures, unlike her home-made wines and preserves, sometimes soured and fermented in a very unpleasant manner. She had been twice married, and both times had bettered her condition ; and she could see no earthly reason why her daughter Margaret should live single all her days because her first marriage had not turned out well. Accordingly Margaret had not left off her first weeds, before her mother began to look about for a match for her. She soon pitched upon a suitable bridegroom in the person of Sir Edward Peckham, a Somersetshire baronet of old family who, having been a Parliament man when that party was uppermost, had changed sides with great dexterity and just at the right moment, contriving to keep not only all his own large property, but, report said, not a little which had belonged to other people before the civil war.

Margaret resisted for a long time with all the force of a not very strong will, but her suitor was persevering and her mother determined. Parents in those days had large authority in such matters, and children little freedom of choice. Lady Carew well knew when and where to apply the screws, and apply them she did with an unrelenting hand,

comforting herself all the time with the reflection that she was acting for her daughter's good, and that Margaret would live to thank her some day.

But that day never came. Margaret, indeed, yielded at last, from sheer want of strength to resist any longer. She married Sir Edward, but she went to her wedding as an unwilling nun might take the vows in her convent. Even her mother had some misgivings as she noticed her daughter's white cheek and sunken eye, and saw the mechanical and lifeless manner in which she went through the marriage ceremony and received the congratulations of her friends, especially as she could not but perceive that the same things were noticed and remarked upon by the company.

"But it will be all right when she has once a family about her," said she to her husband. "She will busy herself with the duties and the pleasures of her station, and forget all about that idle young Winthrop."

Lord Carew had his doubts about things ever being again all right with Margaret; but he was a man who loved peace and quiet at home, so he only replied to his wife's predictions with a vague shake of the head, which might mean anything or nothing.

Margaret was never to hold in her arms a child of her own. Her first and only infant came into the world only to receive a name and a place in the family vault of the Peckhams under Holford Church, while its mother was unconscious of its existence. For many days she lay between life and death, and for weeks and months she was confined to the darkened chamber, which it was feared she would never leave again. At last, however, she recovered and resumed the duties of her station, performing them all with anxious, punctilious accuracy, as if she would thus make up to her husband for that love which she was unable to give him. For years she lived under a heavy cloud of religious depression which nothing could remove. She felt that she had sinned against herself and her husband in taking upon herself vows which she could not perform, and she thought she had thus shut herself quite out of God's mercy. Thus she was deprived of the only thing which could have been any comfort to her. This persuasion had finally given way under the judicious counsel of some of those religious teachers who in the midst of a faithless and perverse generation inculcated a pure and exalted spirituality, such as has never been surpassed. She learned to seek in faithful

and earnest self-consecration "that peace which the world can neither give nor take away;" and her long-troubled heart found rest in God. Thencefor ward her life was one long waiting till that change should come which would restore her to all she loved best; and she was content to wait, doing all in her power to promote the welfare and happiness of those about her, to make up for or to conceal all that was wanting in her husband, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.

Sir Edward did not pretend to understand his wife's religion, but he saw that it had the sanction of such men as Jeremy Taylor and his friends Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, which satisfied all his scruples as to its orthodoxy; and he rejoiced to see that it made his wife happy, for he loved her with all the force of which his somewhat small and narrow nature was capable. To Sir Edward, as to Lady Carew, religion was an affair of state and policy. The sermons which suited him best were discourses upon the divine right of kings, the duty of passive obedience under all conceivable provocations, and the heinous nature of dissent and republicanism; and he sometimes was tempted to entertain serious doubts of the orthodoxy of the vicar of Holford because he dispensed his charities to churchman

and dissenter alike, and seldom preached more than once a quarter upon his favorite topics. Time-server and worldling as he undoubtedly was, Sir Edward was not deficient in generosity. Though the dearest wish of his heart was disappointed by the fact of his having no children, he never by word or look reproached his wife. The only way in which his mortification showed itself was in a great dislike to children in general, and a special hatred towards those of his heir-at-law. Lady Peckham had once ventured to propose that one or two of these young people should be invited to the Hall for a visit, but the request was met with such an angry refusal that it was never repeated.

For the rest, Sir Edward was a good landlord and master, a tolerably efficient justice of the peace, and a keen sportsman, and enjoyed the pleasure of being greatly looked up to by the yeomanry and smaller gentry in the neighborhood, towards whom he was at all times gracious and condescending.

Lady Peckham had frequently noticed Winifred in church and at the village school, founded by a Dame Peckham in days long gone by ; and was so attracted by her appearance that she asked the vicar whose child she was.

"She is a granddaughter of old Master Evans at

the Stonehill farm," was the reply. "Her father married in Devonshire somewhere about Plymouth, and it is said quite above his own rank; and indeed Dame Evans is very different from most of the farmers' wives hereabout."

"Do you know what her name was before she was married?" asked Lady Peckham. "I fancy this little girl reminds me of some one I have known."

"It was a very grave name, being nothing less than Coffin!" replied the vicar, who sometimes ventured upon a very mild little joke. "I have heard that many of the family emigrated to the American plantations, at the accession of his late gracious majesty. But you are ill, my lady!"

"It is nothing," said Lady Peckham, rising; "I sat too long in the close school-room. And so her mother's name was Coffin, and she came from Devonshire!" she murmured. "Strange that I should not have seen at once where the resemblance lay!"

The vicar waited for an explanation, but none came, and he was obliged to wait still longer till he could mention the matter to his sister. Mrs. Alwright nodded, and screwed up her mouth mysteriously.

"I understand it all!" said she. "Mrs. Winthrop, the mother of my lady's first husband, was Coffin. I have often seen her, and certainly this young maid hath a look both of her and of Colonel Winthrop. The poor young gentleman had just such deep gray eyes, always looking as if they saw more than other folks could see, and just such regular eyebrows. No wonder my poor dear lady was drawn to her. I must have a gossip with Dame Evans, and find out whether there was really any kinship between them."

"Then you think my lady still remembers her first husband?" the vicar ventured to ask.

"Don't be a fool, John Alwright! Remember him! Of course she does! My lady is as good a wife as ever breathed; but between ourselves she loves the very shadow of Colonel Winthrop better than she loves Sir Edward's whole body. She would never have married again but for her mother, my old lady, who, with all due reverence, was altogether too fond of having her own way, and putting her finger in other people's pies. Remember him, indeed!" repeated Alwright, indignantly. "Do you suppose I have ever forgotten my poor John Foster, who was killed at Long Marston, though we never were married at all?

I should like to see anybody try to make *me* marry against my will!"

"Doubtless the person who should attempt such coercion would speedily become aware of his error," replied her brother, dryly. "I meant no offence, Hannah, and no disrespect to my lady, whom I honor from my heart, but you know I have but little knowledge of women's matters."

"Of course not! How should you?" said Mrs. Alwright in a mollified tone. "Now let me look over your shirts and bands, and see that you have something decent to wear. You ought to take a wife, John Alwright, if only to sew on your buttons and keep your house in order."

Mrs. Alwright took an early opportunity to question Dame Evans respecting her family, and discovered that she was nearly related to Colonel Winthrop. Whether she ever communicated the fact to her lady no one knew, but it is certain Lady Peckham continued to treat Winifred with great kindness, and to take an active interest in her education, even sometimes going so far as to instruct her herself in those branches of knowledge which were considered suitable to a young woman. Hence it was that at fifteen Winifred was better educated than many young ladies of higher station.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONFERENCE.

IT was, as we have seen, nothing unusual for Winifred to be employed by Mrs. Alwright in gathering flowers and herbs for the still-room, so that Lady Peckham was not at all surprised at meeting her in the shrubbery, or maze, as it was then called.

"Well, Winifred, are you helping Mrs. Alwright, to-day?" asked Lady Peckham, kindly. "She tells me you are making great progress with your work, and she is intending to teach you to do carpet-work. But you are not looking well, sweetheart?"

"I am quite well, my lady; but"—Winifred glanced around, and, seeing no one near, drew close to Lady Peckham, and said in a low voice: "I have a message and a token for you, my lady."

"And if you have, why did you not give them to me before?" asked Lady Peckham, in some displeasure; "or why did not you send them to me by the hands of Mrs. Alwright?"

"Because I was to put them into your own hands, and when no one was by," answered Winifred, modestly but firmly. "It is a matter of life and death, my lady!"

"Winifred, what do you mean?" asked Lady Peckham, surprised and somewhat startled. "You know, little one, I am not to be trifled with."

For all reply Winifred drew the watch and the packet from her bosom, and placed them in Lady Peckham's hands. The lady looked at the watch, and turned so pale that Winifred, alarmed, expected her to sink to the ground.

"Who gave you this?" she asked, in a hoarse whisper.

"'If you please, my lady, it is a long story, and some one might be within hearing, or listening behind the hedge,' replied Winifred, in a low tone.

"You are right!' said Lady Peckham, recovering herself with a great effort. "Come with me."

Winifred followed her benefactress through the garden and along the terrace till they came to a little door in the bottom of one of the many tur-

rets which adorned the front of the Hall. Lady Peckham opened the door with a key which she drew from her pocket, and led the way up a winding stone stair lighted with narrow windows, and into a little chamber where Winifred had never been before. It was very bare of furniture, having only a table, chair, and footstool, with a small Persian rug on the floor before the table, upon which lay a large Bible and one or two other volumes. A couple of shelves well filled with books hung against the wall, which was decorated with two or three pictures, one of which Winifred recognized at once as a portrait of the wounded cavalier who lay concealed at Dame Sprat's cottage.

"Wait for me here!" said Lady Peckham, and went out, shutting the door after her. Winifred waited for what seemed to her a very long time. She looked at the figures on the tapestry which covered the walls and which was adorned with the story of the Deluge, executed in colored wools and silks, and wondered who had the patience to do all that work. She read the titles of all the volumes, and thought Lady Peckham must be a happy woman to possess so many books, and have so much time to read them. She looked at the great

Bible bound in red velvet, and wondered whether there were any pictures in it.

"I suppose this is my lady's closet, where she comes to read and pray," she thought. "It must be very nice to have such a pleasant room all to oneself, with no sewing, or milking, or feeding chickens to interrupt just as one gets to the interesting place. I should not like to be one of the court ladies, who, Mrs. Alwright says, spend all their time in dressing and dancing and painting their faces; but it must be wondrous pleasant to have such a closet as this, and such a withdrawing-room as my lady's, with Indian cabinets and great china jugs full of rose-leaves and spices; and to have nothing to do but to work tapestry and distill medicines and cordials. I would not put any earthworms or woodlice in them, though. I would only use sweet herbs and gums, and powder of corals and pearls, and such things as are in the receipt for Lady Hewett's Cordial Balm, which I copied out for Mrs. Alwright."

Winifred was in some danger of growing discontented, when the door of the closet was again opened, and Lady Peckham entered Winifred could now see that the closet opened into a dressing-room or small parlor, where Mrs. Alwright

was now sitting, and where Winifred had often been to show her needlework to her lady, and to read to her. Lady Peckham closed the door and seemed about to seat herself in her great chair, but as if suddenly changing her mind, she opened another little door concealed by a hanging strip of tapestry, and beckoned Winifred out upon a small stone balcony.

"No one can listen here!" said she. "Tell me now what you have to say."

Winifred related her story in as few words as possible. When she had finished, Lady Peckham stood for some time in silence, looking abroad to the horizon where was to be seen a strip of the blue waters of the Bristol channel.

"Winifred," said she, at last, "do you know what you have done?"

"I hope I have done no wrong, my lady," replied Winifred. "I know there is danger, and that King Monmouth's men are rebels; but, my lady, if he had been twice a rebel, I could not have left the poor gentleman there to die. You would not have done so yourself!" she concluded, rather amazed at her own boldness. "I am sure you would not."

Lady Peckham smiled through her tears, and

sitting down on a stone bench, she drew Winifred to her and kissed her again and again. "Oh, if God had but seen fit to give me such a daughter as you, my child, what a treasure would you be to me! Do you know, sweetheart, what you have done? You have saved the life of my own dearest brother!"

"That then was the reason why Dame Sprat knew him!" said Winifred. "She called him Master Arthur at once, and when I told my grandfather, he said he thought as much. And was that really Mr. Carew?"

"It really was Arthur Carew!" replied Lady Peckham. "The same little brother whom I have nursed and tended many a day (for he was much younger than myself), and who was my greatest comfort when I was in deep affliction. My own dear little Arthur, whom I loved as my own child! He was suspected, though most unjustly, of taking part in the last plot against King Charles, and fled o Holland, where he was much befriended by the unhappy Duke of Monmouth. It must have been by the duke's persuasion that he was induced to join in this last mad undertaking. There would be no hope for him if he were taken. But he must not remain in that miserable hovel, Winifred. You

will help, will you not, to bring him up to the Hall?"

"I will do anything in the world for you, my lady!" replied Winifred, "but"——

"But what, child?"

"I think he is safer where he is than he would be at the Hall, madam. Dame Sprat lives on the edge of the waste, in a most lonesome place, where no one passes by and no one ever goes but our own family. She is so poor that no one will suspect her of having anything to spare for others. If Mr. Carew is brought to the Hall, more than one person must be in the secret. Sir Edward's friends will be coming and going, even Colonel Kirke himself, perhaps, for Sir Edward is well known to be a warm friend to the king."

"That is true!" said the lady; "and yet my heart aches to think of my poor brother lying in that miserable hovel, which will hardly keep out the weather."

"Dame Sprat has lived there ten years!" Winifred ventured to observe. "I have heard my grandfather say that she once lived in as good a house as ours, with servants of her own, and everything comfortable about her."

"Your words go to my heart, Winifred!" said

Lady Peckham. "It was my father who turned Dame Sprat off his land, for the part her husband took in the civil wars. What security can I have that the old woman will not avenge her wrongs upon my unfortunate brother, now that he is in her power?"

"Indeed, my lady, you need have no such fear!" replied Winifred, eagerly. "You do not know Dame Sprat, or you would never think of such a thing. I am certain she would not betray any one, least of all her enemy."

"And why least of all her enemy, little one?"

"Because she is a godly Christian woman, madam, one who loves her Bible and her Saviour and tries to be like Him. She never complains of her lot, poor and hard as it is, for she says it would be foolish to quarrel with a shelter which she may leave any minute for the Courts of her Father's house in heaven; and while she is daily and hourly expecting to go to meet her Saviour, I am sure she would never dare to disobey His commands by rendering evil for evil. Besides I do not think she bears a grudge against Mr. Arthur Carew for anything his father may have done. She welcomed him as though he had been a prince of the blood, and would gladly have given up to

him her own bed, only he would not take it. Indeed, my lady, if you knew Dame Sprat as I do, you would never think of her betraying anybody!"

"Aye, you have doubtless a great knowledge of the world and of men," said the lady, smiling sadly. "When you have seen as much of both as I, you may be more distrustful."

"Then I hope I shall never see more," said Winifred. "I do not like to distrust people; but I am sure of Dame Sprat!"

"And you do really think my brother would be safe with her — safer than he would be at the Hall?"

"I do, my lady. And you know," she added, timidly, "it is our secret as well as your ladyship's, and if the dame betrays us we are utterly ruined, without remedy."

"True!" said Lady Peckham. "You are very young, my maid, to be burdened with secrets which concern men's lives. Suppose you should be brought before the chief-justice and questioned, could you have the firmness to keep silence?"

"I think so, madam."

"You have a very good conceit of yourself, Winifred," said Lady Peckham, not altogether pleased with the readiness of the answer. "Take

care that it does not betray you. Pride goeth before destruction."

"If I may venture to say so much, I think you do not quite understand me," said Winifred, modestly. "I was thinking the matter over as I came home through the fields last night, and perplexing myself with the same question, whether I should be able to keep the secret, when all at once it seemed to come to me that I was taking thought for to-morrow, and worrying myself about things which might never happen. And then I remembered a great many such texts as these: 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness;' 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;' and a great many more such verses of Scripture. So then I thought God has always helped me when I have asked Him heretofore, and why should I begin to doubt His love now, when I need His aid more than ever? It is not because I have any strength of my own, but because I hope He will give it me."

"You are a strange child, Winifred! How do you come to have such grave thoughts, when other girls of your age are thinking only of new gowns and gingerbread?"

"Please, my lady, I like new gowns and ginger-

bread too," replied Winifred, smiling. "My father has promised to bring me a new gown all the way from the Indies when he comes home again, and also a china pot full of sweetmeats."

"That is spoken like a child again!" said Lady Peckham, smiling in her turn; "and now, Winifred, you shall stay and dine with Mrs. Alwright while I consider what is best for us to do. We must let her into the secret. I see no help for that, since we shall need her assistance, but I am sure of her, and indeed it is only her due. But oh, my maid, be careful. Remember how much may hang upon one careless word!"

"I shall remember, my lady," said Winifred, quietly, while she could not help thinking that there was not much danger of her being careless so long as her own life and that of her friends depended upon her prudence, as well as the life of Mr. Arthur Carew.

CHAPTER V.

JACK'S MISFORTUNE.

MRS. ALWRIGHT rose up with a firm and somewhat dissatisfied countenance, as her lady entered with Winifred. Fond as she was of the child, she was not well pleased that Winifred should have so long a conference with her lady from which she herself was excluded, and she had already prepared in her own mind a lecture upon forwardness and presumption of which she meant to give Winifred the benefit so soon as they should be alone together. This lecture, however was destined never to be delivered.

"Will you come with me, Alwright?" said Lady Peckham. "Winifred, you may remain here and amuse yourself, if you will, with the pictures in that great book on the table. Keep the door shut, and inform me if any one wants me."

The book was well worth looking at, being a Bible illustrated with wood-cuts by Albert Durer, the father, as he might almost be called, of wood-engraving. Winifred almost forgot her mighty secret, as she studied the pictures of Joseph and his brethren, of David and Goliath, of Samson and the Queen of Sheba, and above all those in the Gospels, of the shepherds coming with their humble offerings, of the wise men presenting their gifts, and of Mary and Martha in their house at Bethany. Her natural good taste and feeling led her fully to appreciate the beauty and sentiment of the pictures, while her ignorance prevented her from seeing the various incongruities of scenery, costume, &c. For aught she knew Jerusalem might have been adorned with just such steeples and gables, and Martha might have kept her dishes in just such an open carved dresser as that in the picture. She had not nearly finished the volume, when Mrs. Alwright appeared, her eyes red with weeping. She took Winifred by the hand without speaking a word, and led her through various galleries and up a turnpike stair to her own private chamber, when, having bolted the door, she caught the child in her arms, and covered her with kisses, mingled with tears, sobs, and words of endearment. Wini-

fred was amazed, for Mrs. Alwright had usually thought it necessary that her pupil, like all young people, should be kept down to her proper place, and made to understand that if she were treated with any consideration, it arose solely from the kindness of her elders and superiors, and not in the least from any merits of her own. Winifred had never before received from her good old friend any greater token of approbation than a pat on the head or a few carefully measured words of praise.

"Oh, my dear lamb! my blessed child!" sobbed Mrs. Alwright. "To think that you should have done such a thing! That you should have saved Master Arthur, whom I have carried in my arms when he was a baby, and taught him his letters with my own hands, my dear—and risking your precious life abroad in the lonesome fields at midnight, and the dew and all, enough to give you your death! You shall have two bottles of the rose cordial to take home with you; and mind you take a glass whenever you come in, to prevent catching cold. But Master Arthur, living in that lonesome place, along with Dame Sprat! She was always a good woman and kind to the poor, and I never did justify my Lord Carew in turning her off his land, where she and hers had lived for hun-

dreds of years, even before my lord's ancestors came from Normandy, which they did with the Conqueror, my dear! And all because her husband was for the Protector, which, for the matter of that, so were some other folks who shall be nameless, though they turned round quickly enough when the sun shone on the other side of the hedge. Dame Sprat shall have my duffel gown and my gray cloak to keep her warm this winter, and I will knit her some woollen stockings with my own hands. But poor dear Master Arthur, how he could be so mad I can't think, only he was always in mischief from a boy, when he used to steal my saffron cakes, and was flogged at school for helping to bar out the master. But to think of him wounded and lying out in the fields all night! Dear, dear! it is enough to break one's heart!"

All this and much more did Mrs. Alwright pour out with many sobs and little regard to her stops or her grammar, till Winifred, terrified for the consequences, reminded her that it would be highly dangerous for any one to hear Master Arthur's name mentioned, or even to guess that anything unusual was the matter.

"I know it, my dear, I know it! and you shall

see that no one shall ever guess anything from me. I shall feel better now that I have had my cry out! But poor dear Master Arthur, that was such a lovely baby, and my poor dear lady loved him more like a son than a brother"——

"I think I hear some one coming up-stairs!" said Winifred, fearing lest the cry should commence again. Mrs. Alwright started up and wiped her eyes vigorously.

"Open the door, Winifred, while I wash my face," said she. "It will be only Betty, coming to say that our dinner is ready. You are to stay and dine with me, my dear, and then you shall help me to make the conserve of hips, and I will send a pot of it to your good mother against winter comes."

But Betty had more to tell. The herd-boy had come up to say that Winifred was needed at home, because her brother had fallen from a tree and hurt himself very badly; also Betty gave notice that Colonel Kirke was come to dine and sup with Sir Edward, and Mrs. Alwright was wanted to attend to the pastry and other additions to the dinner which the presence of such an important guest rendered necessary.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Alwright, "how things

do happen all together! I hope that unlucky boy has broken no bones, but it would be just like him. I often wonder why boys should be made at all, they are such plagues. One can do something with girls in the way of needlework and giving them dolls to play with, but men ought to be made already grown up, and then they are plagues enough. You must go home at once, Winifred, without waiting to finish your work, and mind you remember what I have told you. Your mother will need you, for at such times even little girls can be of use, if they are not idle and careless, as too many are. Betty, why do you stand staring and listening there at the door, instead of getting the fowls ready for the spit? Go about your work directly, and let me find the chickens neatly dressed when I come down-stairs. Come into the store-room with me, Winifred, and I will give you a basket and medicine for the poor woman you spoke of."

Mrs. Alwright's store-room was a model of its kind. The stone floor was as white as hands could make it, and the wood-work shone with much rubbing. Every inch of wall was covered with cupboards, shelves, and drawers, containing piles upon piles of fine linen, much of it of Mrs. Alwright's

own spinning, and jars, pots, and boxes innumerable filled with all sorts of good things, while hams, sausages, bundles of sweet herbs, and bunches of onions and garlic dangled from the ceiling. It was evident to the most unpractised eye that all these good things were presided over by a vigilant and capable guardian, for nothing was out of place—everything was labelled, covered, and secured in the most approved manner, and not a stray crumb was left lying anywhere to tempt the mice. Mrs. Alwright took down a good-sized basket and began filling it, taking the opportunity, which, indeed, she seldom lost, of delivering a little moral lecture for Winifred's benefit.

"You see now, Winifred, the advantage of having a place for everything, and everything in its place. If I were obliged to hunt all over the house for a basket, and then look half an hour for every individual thing I wanted to put into it, it would take me half the day; but now you see I have everything ready to my hand. These saffron cakes and these clean napkins and handkerchiefs are for Master Arthur. He used to be very fond of saffron cakes, poor dear young gentleman! This bit of bacon and these sausages are for the dame, and also this bottle of ginger cordial, which will be

warming and comforting for her poor old bones. Now, can you carry any more?"

Winifred lifted the basket, and thought she could.

"Well then, here is the rose cordial for yourself, and a cake of gingerbread; but mind you must not let Jack have any of that to-day. And here are two clean shirts for Master Arthur. They are Sir Edward's, and are old and worn, but they will be better than none. So now go along, my dear, and may God bless you! Come again as soon as you can. And, Winifred!" she called after her, "don't forget to tell your good mother to send up the green geese as soon as she can get them ready. She need not dress them. Betty and her niece can see to that."

"Don't you mind Mrs. Alwright, Miss Winifred!" said good-natured Betty, as Winifred presently passed out by the kitchen door. "Her bark is worse than her bite, we all know that. I see she has been lecturing you, but that is all for your good. Young folks must learn. She scolds me too, but la! I don't mind. I know her ways, and take her the year round, you will not find many better people than Mrs. Alwright, look where you will."

"And that is very true, Betty," said Winifred,

not at all displeased to see Betty go off on a wrong scent. "I am sure she is very good to me. But I must hurry home as fast as I can."

"Aye, and you have a heavy basket to carry—for some poor body, I warrant me! That is another of her ways. She will rail at my poor sister for having so many children, and not keeping them cleaner, but she always ends by giving her something to make over for them, and maybe a loaf of white bread for a treat. Then there was Madge Wilkin"——

"I really must go, Betty!" said Winifred, cutting short the catalogue of Mrs. Alwright's good deeds, to which at another time she would gladly have listened. "Mother will need me, I am sure, and I want to see poor Jack."

"Aye, go along, there's a dear maid! It is some comfort to have you about," said Betty, continuing her remarks for the benefit of her own niece, a girl about Winifred's age, who was cleaning some pots near by. "Not like some girls, who cannot even scour a saucepan without blacking themselves from head to foot. Why can't you take pattern by Miss Winifred, Cicily? You never saw *her* in such a mess—no, not when she was no bigger than my thumb!"

Winifred was not destined to reach home without farther interruption. She was walking very fast down the avenue, with her eyes bent on the ground, when she was nearly run over by two gentlemen, who were coming in the opposite direction with their guns and dogs, and followed by a groom leading their horses. Winifred looked up with a start, and recognized Sir Edward Peckham. She had never seen the other gentleman in the richly laced uniform, but she guessed at once that the fierce, sun-burnt face, bold, wicked-looking eyes, and long mustache belonged to no other than the dreaded Colonel Kirke, who was feared and hated almost as much as the chief-justice himself, for his cruelty and rapacity. Her color rose and her heart beat fast at the sight of the man whom she associated with so much misery and distress. She courtesied, and would have passed on, but she was not to escape so easily.

"Holloa! what little puritan have we here?" said the soldier, in a loud, coarse voice, and seizing Winifred by the arm. "Not so fast, my pretty maid!" he added, as Winifred would have escaped. "What, do you think I make a breakfast of children every morning, as some folks say, that you are so afraid of me?"

"I am not afraid of you," said Winifred, standing still and looking her captor in the face, while her large gray eyes flashed with indignation. "My brother is sick, and my mother needs me at home. I pray you let me pass on my way!"

"Your brother is sick, eh? That means he has been out with Monmouth and got hurt, I suppose! Where does this brother of yours live, mistress? I must look after him!"

"My brother is only twelve years old, and was hurt in falling from a tree," replied Winifred, calmly. "He and I live with our grandfather, at the gray house on the hill yonder."

"What, you are old Master Evans' granddaughter!" said Sir Edward, kindly. "You are so grown I did not know you! This maid is a favorite of Lady Peckham's, Colonel Kirke, and I can vouch for the loyalty of her whole family. I pray you let her pass on her way, as she desires."

"My lady knows how to choose her favorites, I should say!" returned Colonel Kirke. "I protest I have not seen a prettier rustic damsel. Well, give me a kiss for your ransom, my shepherdess, and here is a gold piece for you all the way from Africa, to make up for the fright I have given you."

Trembling more with indignation than fear,

Winifred submitted to the kiss, and received the piece of gold, which she inwardly determined to put into the poor-box the very first time she went to church. "It looks as though it had blood upon it," she thought, as she went on her way; "and what an evil-looking man he is! I wonder how Sir Edward can endure to have him in his house. But they say he is always for keeping well with whatever party is uppermost. I am glad that Colonel Kirke did not take notice of my basket. I don't know what I should have said to account for some of the things in it. Poor Jack! I trust he is not very much hurt. It is unlucky that he should take just this busy time for his mishap. I fear I shall not be able to go to Dame Sprat's at all to-day. They have food enough to last till to-morrow, that is one comfort."

When Winifred arrived at home, she found both pain and pleasure awaiting her. The pain was the news that Jack was indeed very much hurt, having broken his arm and bruised himself severely. He had climbed the tree to the magpie's nest, secured a pair of the young ones, and come half way down with his prize, when one of the dry limbs gave way, and he came to the ground, killing the poor young birds in his fall.

The vicar, who possessed considerable knowledge of surgery, happened to be riding by at the time, saw the tumble, and had been the first on the spot. He carried the poor boy into the house, set his arm, and gave his mother directions for his treatment, adding a special injunction to let the patient have no food stronger than gruel or weak broth till he came again. This injunction seemed to poor Jack a greater calamity even than his broken arm. He was very fond of good things. He remembered the nice jellies and cordials, the beaten-up eggs and roasted fowls, which had been prepared for Winifred when she was slowly recovering from her long fever, and he had comforted himself with the thought of all these dainties for his prospective pain and confinement. The water-gruel law was a terrible blow, and poor Jack was in very low spirits indeed. He had the additional discomfort of knowing that his trouble was all his own fault, for he had been strictly forbidden to climb the tree, and he had waited till his grandfather was away in the barley-field, and his mother busy in the dairy, before he made the attempt. As his grandfather said, he was bold in the wrong place and cowardly in the wrong place. He was not

afraid to disobey, and he was afraid to do a necessary errand.

The good news which met Winifred was the arrival of a letter and a parcel from her father, whose ship had come into Plymouth, instead of into Bristol as usual, having been damaged by a gale not far from the coast. The parcel contained, besides tokens for the rest of the family, the promised new gown for Winifred, and better still three new books! One of these was the "Pilgrim's Progress," then lately published, with wood-cuts, which, however rude they might appear besi le the latest edition of the Tract Society and the Sunday-School Union, were marvels of art in the eyes of our young friend. The other books were "A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," by Mr. William Law, and the "Paradise Lost" of John Milton.

"These seem but grave books for a young maid like Winifred," wrote her father; "but I have read the "Pilgrim's Progress," and believe my serious daughter will care more for it than for any fairy tale. The other books were given me by a very grave and religious gentleman who went out to India on board our ship; so I doubt not Winifred will be pleased with them. I have just now heard of the terrible things which have been happening

among you, and I am thankful that none of our family have been engaged in them ; but I doubt I shall hear heavy tidings of some of our neighbors. I cannot leave the ship just at present, but I shall come as soon as possible."

Delighted as Winifred was with her new treasures, she had scant time to examine them. She was wanted everywhere at once—by Jack's bedside, to tell him tales and sing him to sleep ; in the dairy, to churn, while Priscy carried their lunch to the men in the barley-field ; then to feed the fowls, and take especial care of a brood of late chickens ; to count up the ducks and drive home the young turkeys. She had hardly time to eat her supper, and any visit to Dame Sprat was of course out of the question ; so she carefully locked up the basket lest it should tell tales, and set about her multifarious tasks with her usual neatness and dispatch. As Dame Magdalen said, the child was run off her feet! So that when bed-time came, she was glad to go to bed without even asking to sit by the fire and examine her precious new books.

CHAPTER VI.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

IT was not till the next afternoon that Winifred found time to visit Dame Sprat again, and then it was only by giving Jack full possession of her new book, that she was able to leave him even for an hour. Jack had usually rather a contempt for Winifred's society, classing her with the rest of "women folks," who he considered were made only to wait upon their fathers and brothers. But the poor boy was no braver about bearing pain than he was about anything else, and he had a great deal of pain to bear. Nobody could turn and smooth his hot pillow, or cool his feverish hands and forehead, or put his bed to rights without hurting him so well as Winnie, not even his mother; and above all. Winifred had never once said or even looked "I told you so!" or, "Just good enough

for you!" remarks which he had to bear often enough from the maids Priscy and Jenny, with whom he was no favorite. But by the afternoon of the next day, Jack began to feel better. He was greatly taken by the pictures of Giant Despair and Apollyon in the "Pilgrim's Progress," and he agreed, if Winnie would leave him the book, to allow her to go to Dame Sprat's, provided she did not stay too long. Winifred was glad to get away upon any terms. She took on her arm the basket Mrs. Alwright had sent, and set off across the fields, thinking, as she went, of Christian setting out on his pilgrimage with his burden on his back, of the little wicket-gate, and of Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who, she fancied, might have looked a good deal like Sir Edward Peckham.

When she reached the dame's cottage, she was surprised not to see the good woman sitting by her window, as usual. "Something must have happened!" she thought, and quickening her steps she entered without knocking. A curious scene met her eyes as she opened the door. The poor old dame was in bed, apparently unable to rise, but everything in the hut was in its usual order; a saucepan was simmering on the embers, and Mr. Carew himself, in his shirt sleeves, was in the

act of sweeping up the hearth. He started as Winifred entered, but quickly recovered himself when he recognized the visitor.

"So it is you, my fearless little guide!" said he, laughing, and blushing a little. "The dame is ill with rheumatism, and I could do no less than take care of her. I fear I am but a rough sick-nurse, though I think I may fairly call myself a tolerable cook. Eh, dame?"

"Indeed, sir, I think you are very skilful in both ways," replied Dame Sprat; "but I fear you are running a great risk."

"Indeed you are, Mr. Carew!" said Winifred, earnestly. "You are all the time in danger of being surprised. Think if it had been anybody but me, who stole upon you so silently just now. You must needs be content to lie concealed during the day, at least for the present. Colonel Kirke is still in the neighborhood, though the soldiers are mostly gone. He dined with Sir Edward at the Hall yesterday, and he is to be with him for several days. Bethink you, sir, it is not only your own safety, but that of all your friends, which depends upon your prudence!"

"Even so, my wise little monitor! I know all that as well as you, but I could not see my good,

kind hostess suffering so long as I was able to help. Now that she is in better hands, I will get me into my lair again, so soon as you have told me the news from the Hall. Did you give my sister the watch?"

"Yes, sir, the next morning. She has sent you a message, and Mrs. Alwright some clothes and other things, which are in the basket. She has also sent you some sausages and bacon, dame, and some ginger cordial; and she bade me say she had a gown and cloak for you against cold weather."

"She is very good!" said Dame Sprat. "Mrs. Alwright was always kind to the poor, and her mother before her. I knew the family well!"

"And you say Kirke is at the Hall?" said Arthur Carew.

"Yes, and I understand he is to remain some time, for the sake of the shooting. I saw him and Sir Edward with their guns and dogs, yesterday morning."

"Aye, my cautious brother-in-law will be friends with whichever party is uppermost, whatever company he may keep in so doing!" muttered Arthur. "I have seen the day when he would not have been very fond of Kirke's society. No chance of any help from him! But what said my sister?"

"My lady and I talked the matter over," said Winifred, gravely, and not observing the slight smile exchanged between the dame and Arthur at the words. "She bade me say that she would gladly have you at the Hall, but she judges you are safer here for the present than you could be anywhere else. And, dame," continued Winifred, "my lady prays you to forget all past cause of unkindness, of which there has been more than enough, and for her mother's sake, who was always your good friend, to be kind to Mr. Arthur."

The old dame smiled rather proudly, and a little color mounted to her withered cheek.

"My lady has no reason to fear!" she replied. "I have no cause of quarrel with her. I would serve her with all my heart, were it only for the sake of that gracious and godly youth Colonel Winthrop, my husband's friend. Neither have I aught against Master Arthur, seeing he was but a babe in arms at the time of my misfortunes; but were my Lord Carew himself to seek shelter with me from his enemies, he should be welcome to all this poor hut affords, for the sake not of old times or ties, but of Him who purchased forgiveness for me with His own blood, even our Lord Jesus Christ."

Arthur Carew reverently bowed his head. "You are indeed a true Christian, my good old friend," said he. "If ever I come to my own, this matter shall be righted for you, even if it costs me the half of my inheritance."

"Ah! my dear young gentleman," cried the dame, kindly, "I trust and pray that you may indeed be brought back to your father's house in peace, but, my dears, long before that time I shall have entered upon a far greater inheritance, even that which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away. But, Master Arthur, when you do come to your own, as something tells me you will, remember me, and for my sake meddle not with the consciences of men. If they are wrong in their belief, it is to God they must give account; and if right, persecution will not alter them, while it will prove a millstone round your neck and those of your descendants. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children!"

"Yes, methinks I have reason to believe that!" said Arthur, with some bitterness. "My father made six families homeless for conscience' sake, and now his eldest son is a poor lunatic, and the younger a homeless, outlawed wanderer; while his daughter—but I will say nothing of her. She

has never been a free agent. How does my sister, Winifred?"

Winifred did not answer for the moment. She was looking out of the window, from which she presently turned, with a face ashy pale, but with her usual quiet manner.

"I fear all is lost!" said she. "Sir Edward and Colonel Kirke are coming across the waste with their dogs and guns. I can see the colonel's mustache! What shall we do?"

"I must go!" said Arthur Carew, hastily looking for his doublet, which he had thrown aside during the process of his cookery. "I will not be found here to bring ruin upon you all. Farewell, dame! Farewell, Winifred, and may God bless you!"

"Stay!" said Dame Sprat, raising herself and speaking in a tone of authority. "You go to certain death! Winifred, how near are they?"

"They are by the great black thorn tree," said Winifred, peeping out. "They seem to be looking at something in the water."

"Aye, the snare with which I took the great pike which is now stewing in the saucepan," said Arthur. "I doubt the fish will prove a dear bargain."

"There is yet time, and the delay is all in our favor!" said the old woman. "Get you at once

into the shed, Master Arthur. Climb over the fagots, and lie down behind them, close to the wall, pulling them over you. Take with you the clothes and the wine my lady sent, lest they tell tales. Now, Winifred, close the door. Leave the basket where it is, and the sausages also. Trust me to account for them if any questions are asked. Now that you have made all tidy, take the book, and sit down as if reading to me. It may be that they will pass on without calling, but should they come we are ready for them. Now, my child, let us look to the Strong for strength."

The dame's prayer was in few words, but it brought back the courage to Winifred's heart and the color to her cheeks. She took the Bible and sat down by the bedside, from which she could watch the approach of the sportsmen. They hesitated for a moment, and then turned toward the door of the hut, which they entered without knocking. Dame Sprat slightly raised herself in bed.

"You are welcome to my poor house, with your friend, Sir Edward Peckham!" she said, with, as Winifred thought, the air of a queen. "Can I do aught to serve you? Winifred, set the chair and stool for the gentlemen."

"Do not disturb yourself, my good dame," said

Sir Edward, kindly; for, though a pompous man in general, he was always gracious and polite, especially to his inferiors in rank. "A drink of fair water is all we require."

"The water is none of the best, but such as it is you are heartily welcome," replied Dame Sprat. "Winifred, bring a jug of fresh water, and mix with it some of the ginger cordial you brought me, to take off the earthy taste."

"What! My little puritan again, I protest!" exclaimed Colonel Kirke. "What brings you here, my fairy?"

"I came to see and wait upon Dame Sprat," replied Winifred.

"And you seem to have performed your office well!" said the colonel. "Your cooking smells very savory," he continued, lifting the cover of the saucepan without ceremony. "Pray, did your mother send this fine fish with all the rest?"

"No," replied the dame. "That was given me by a stranger who had been fishing in the stream not far away. I have more than once received such treats from the sportsmen and fowlers, who now and then call, as you have done, for a drink of water or some directions concerning the way.

The fish is at your service, gentlemen, if you please to eat."

"No, no, dame, I will not rob you of your supper; but you are lucky in having such a neat handmaiden — a 'neat-handed Phyllis,' as that pestilent old roundhead, John Milton, says. I could find it in my heart to take her away from you. What say you, my fairy, will you go with me to London to see the king and dress in silks and satins?"

"No!" replied Winifred, as she poured out the water; "I am but a simple country maid, and I have no desire to be anything else."

"The gentleman is but jesting with you, child!" said Sir Edward, not very well pleased with the soldier's tone toward his wife's favorite, since any person or thing in the remotest degree connected with himself became sacred in his eyes. "Colonel Kirke, will it please you to drink?"

"Well, here's a health to you and your attendant sprite, dame!" said the colonel. "What makes the dog so uneasy?"

One of Sir Edward's dogs had been snuffing about the hut ever since they entered, smelling here and there, and whining eagerly. Winifred's heart sank fathoms deep as she saw him scratch-

ing at the door of the shed, and heard the soldier's question. She thought all was indeed lost, but the old woman answered in her usual quiet tone :

"Doubtless he smells the cat, which hath her kittens among the fagots. May I ask you, gentleman, as a favor, not to let the creature be disturbed? She is almost my only companion, and even the love of a dumb beast is some solace, as I sit here alone all day."

"Truly, I should think so!" said Kirke. "Have no fear, dame! Your cat shall not be troubled, though I think a dog would be the better companion."

The dame smiled. "A dog could not provide for himself as my poor Tabby does, and in poverty such as mine, even the food of a dog is of consequence."

"Where have I seen you before, dame?" asked the soldier, abruptly. "Your face, voice, and manner are all familiar to me, and yet I cannot recall the time or place where I have known you."

"Yes, you have been under my roof and eaten at my table in other days," replied Dame Sprat. "When you were a young lad, staying with your mother's brother in Devonshire, you and your young cousins used often to come to my house to eat

junkets and raspberries with clotted cream. I well remember the fall from the great pear-tree, by which you got that scar on your cheek, and your encounter with my husband's long-horned bull."

"Aye, when you came in with your broom-stick, and drove the animal away. Truly I had the worst of that encounter, and but for your timely help had hardly been here to tell the tale. But why did you not make yourself known to me, dame, since you remembered me so well?"

"I am but a poor woman now, living upon charity, and you are a great gentleman!" said the dame, with a touch of the gentle pride she sometimes showed. "Things are greatly changed since I was at the head of my own house and you were a young boy, not much above my own rank."

The fierce soldier of fortune sighed. "Yes, dame, they are indeed, and not for the better, perhaps, with either of us. However, it is a world of changes, and we must even take it as it comes. But tell me, dame, have you seen any of the escaped rebels lurking here in the waste? It seems a likely place enough to afford them shelter. Sir Edward, suppose we bring out the blood-hound, and see what he can find for us? It would afford us good

sport—better than tramping through the moss after wild ducks."

"You are indeed changed from the innocent and kind-hearted lad I once knew you, since you can talk so lightly of hunting your fellow-creatures with hounds, like beasts of the chase!" said Dame Sprat, sadly and severely. "Surely enough of blood hath already been shed in this unhappy cause. Remember, Colonel Kirke, that though man and the world change, there is One who changeth not—One who has solemnly and sternly declared that 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed!' and that 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.' To Him you must one day render a strict account, and neither rank nor riches, nor the favor of kings, will weigh one atom with Him, to whom even kings themselves must answer for the deeds done in the body!"

"'When He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth the poor!'" said Winifred, in a low voice, and speaking more to herself than to any one else.

"What, you too, my fairy? Nay, then I must indeed stand reproved! Sir Edward, do you allow female preachers upon your lands? Methinks

the vicar should resent such an encroachment upon his office."

"We allow old women to say what they please, so long as they do not forget the respect due to their betters. Winifred, you are too forward with your words! Your lady would be much displeased."

"Oh she did but discharge her conscience or her mind, which comes to much the same thing," said Kirke, laughing. "It would be hard indeed to refuse women the use of their tongues, since they have no other weapons. And so, my fair Saint Winifred, you will not come to London with me, for all the fine things?"

"No, sir!" replied Winifred. "London is no place for such as I am. Amy Crofoot went to London, and I have heard she came to no good."

"Well, you are a wise maid, and I will tease you no more. But tell me, child, why are you so afraid of me? You trembled and changed color when I spoke to you first in the park, as though you expected no less than to be ordered to execution, and I think you are little better now. Why should you fear me?"

"Because I have heard such tales of you," replied Winifred, modestly but firmly. "I mean no

offence," she added, seeing his brow darken ; "but since you are pleased to ask me I must needs speak the truth."

"You should have known, Winifred, that even were he so inclined, Colonel Kirke would never have dreamed of offering injury to any member of *my* family," said Sir Edward, with more than usual stateliness ; "and such I may well call you, since my lady is pleased to distinguish you by her favor, though you do not at present dwell under my roof."

Winifred made her lowest reverence, in acknowledgment of Sir Edward's words. "I thank you humbly, Sir Edward," said she. "I do not fear Colonel Kirke so much now, for I see he can be kind when it pleases him."

"Aye, and how do you know that, sweetheart?" said Kirke.

"Because you would not let the dog hunt and worry Dame Sprat's cat, and because you do not seem angry at her plain speaking," replied Winifred.

The soldier's brow smoothed itself, and a smile stole over his face, which seemed for the moment to make another man of him.

"It is but a small matter to change your mind upon," said he. "I should indeed be a brute to

make such a return to an old friend for her hospitality. But, Winifred, do you not know that these people of whom you have heard were the king's enemies, and deserved to be punished?"

"I know that the Duke of Monmouth was the king's enemy, and that the people were wrong in following him," replied Winifred; "but I think, with all submission, that the way for the king to turn them into his friends would be to treat them kindly, and show mercy toward them."

"You are but a child, and do not understand these matters," said Colonel Kirke.

"I know that, and therefore I would rather be excused from speaking of them."

"Colonel Kirke, it is full time we were going, if you mean to be at home by midnight," said Sir Edward, impatiently. "Your supper will be spoiled by waiting, and my lady will be uneasy at our delay."

"I am at your service," said Colonel Kirke, rising. "Farewell, dame, and thank you for your courtesy. I will leave you a brace of wild ducks for your fair cookmaid to exercise her skill upon, and here is a broad piece or two to repay your hospitality, and for the sake of old times. Nay, I pray you refuse not my gift. It will be at least

one item to my credit in the account you spoke of."

"I need no payment, and you are heartily welcome to all you have had," replied Dame Sprat. "But I will not refuse your gift, which is pleasing to me as a token of kindness for an old acquaintance, and will furnish me with many needed comforts. I am often in want, and indeed should starve but for the kindness of Dame Evans and her daughter. Sir Edward, present my humble duty to your excellent lady. Farewell, gentlemen, both—may God bless you!"

"That is a stately old dame!" said Kirke, after they had left the cottage, followed by the dogs, one of which, however, showed no disposition to go. "With what an air she delivered her blessing, as she bade us farewell! Methinks an archbishop could hardly have done it better. She was well to pass in the world when I knew her in Devonshire. How has she become so poor? Her husband was accounted a rich man, and one that knew how to keep what he had."

"He was a chaplain in Cromwell's army," replied Sir Edward, "and Lord Carew, upon whose land they lived, turned the family adrift after the old

man's death. She would hardly have found a harbor upon my estate, but this hut and the small bit of arable land on which it stands belong to Master Evans, one of our substantial yeomen, and a loyal man both to church and state. Indeed, one can hardly grudge the poor old creature her miserable shelter, though I dare swear she is as rank a puritan and republican at heart as ever her husband was. She is, as you see, somewhat of a preacher herself, but otherwise harmless enough."

"It would be hardly fair to complain of her preaching, since she gave us of the best she had at the same time. It is amazing, however, the constancy these roundheads show. I make no doubt this infirm old creature would go to the stake with the same dignified composure with which she welcomed us to her fireside, and sing psalms till the smoke stopped her breath. I am glad I was able to afford her some help, for she was kind to me when I had but few friends, and I believe saved my life in that same battle with the long-horned bull. There, your dog is uneasy again!"

"Yes, he cannot give up the old woman's cat! 'Tis a dog which once belonged to my wife's young brother, who died abroad, and he hath never been

properly broken in. Come to heel, sirrah, or I shall find means to teach you!"

The dog obeyed, but unwillingly, and the two sportsmen hastened on their way.

CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER CONSULTATIONS.

WINNIE stood at the cottage door and watched the retreating figures of the sportsmen as long as she could see them. It seemed to her that no one was ever so long in walking a quarter of a mile, but at last they reached the bend of the valley down which the little brook took its course, and were out of view, Carlo pausing and taking another look at the hut, as though his mind were not yet quite at rest about that cat. When she could no longer see the least glimpse, Winifred returned to the bedside, and, throwing herself down with her face hidden in the bedclothes, she burst into tears, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Why, my maid, what is the matter?" asked the old woman. "The danger is over for this time,

and Master Arthur is safe. They will not come back again to-night."

"I know it," sobbed Winifred. "I know I am silly, but I cannot help crying. It was so dreadful! And the dog smelling at the door, and all! I thought two or three times it was all over with us!"

"And so did I!" replied Dame Sprat. "I heartily wished the cat at Bristol, or further off, fond as I am of the poor creature."

"Then you think it was really the cat, and not Master Arthur, the dog was after?" said Winifred, composing herself by degrees.

"I think so, but of course I cannot tell," replied the dame. "At all events, the cat was there, and right glad am I that the gentlemen would not allow her to be molested."

"Does it not seem strange," said Winifred, "that a man like Colonel Kirke, who laughed at the prayers of mothers for their children, and made hideous jests upon the poor dying creatures in their agonies—he who made a poor lad run a race with a colt to save his life, and hanged him after all—should have been willing to spare the poor cat because you asked him, and should have taken your plain-speaking so kindly?"

"He was in cool blood, and I suppose his heart might be softened by old recollections. There are few men, however hardened in crime, but have some good left about them, if one can only find it."

"I wonder if there is any good left about Judge Jeffreys?" said Winifred.

"Possibly there may be, but I should expect it sooner in Kirke than in him. Kirke is a soldier of fortune, bred up in the midst of war and carnage, and has lived many years in Tangier among the heathen, where he has probably not had one good or softening influence near him. The consequence is that he is a savage, and almost a wild beast. But so far as I know, he has not deliberately sold himself to the devil for gold and gain, as it seems Jeffreys has done, and as did the Duke of Lauderdale in Scotland, who, himself a Presbyterian, lent himself to persecute the suffering people of that name. But I cannot but be sorry for Kirke. It is sad to me to see one whom I remember well as a pleasant, kind-hearted little lad, transformed into such a ruffian. We live in evil times, my child, but I trust they will soon pass away. Something tells me that better days are at hand for this poor country!"

"Yes, if the good Princess of Orange should

come to be queen; but then the king may live a long time, and perhaps have children."

"Well, we will not speculate upon the matter, child. There is One who is King over all, and who can bring good out of the darkest evil. I think we are in no further danger of visitors this night, so you may venture to call Master Arthur, and receive his messages for his sister."

Winifred opened the door, and called, "Master Arthur, they are gone, and the dame thinks you are safe. Will you please come out, and tell me what I am to say to my lady?"

"So they are gone at last!" said Arthur, creeping out of his hole, and stretching his long limbs vigorously. "It is a fine time, truly, when I am driven to hide, like a rat in a hole, from my own sister's husband."

"You ought to be thankful that you had the hole to hide in, and that you were safe even there!" said Winifred, rather severely, for she was scandalized by the lightness of his tone. "I am sure I gave all up for lost when the dog scratched at the door."

"And so I am thankful, my wise little monitor, not only for the hole, but still more to you and my good old friend here, for the steady courage you

showed under such a severe trial. I heard every word as I lay close to the wall, and knew how near my poor old Carlo was to betraying me. The dumb beast has a longer memory for his friends than many who call themselves his superiors. I am thankful, too, to Mistress Puss and her family for taking my peril upon herself. I think I shall always stand up for the whole race of cats from this day, and, by the way, they shall have a share of the fish, which I fear is sadly spoiled by waiting so long."

Winifred sighed. This jesting tone seemed to her sadly out of place in one who had just had such a narrow escape from captivity and death. Dame Sprat heard the sigh, and said kindly :

"You must remember, Winifred, that Master Arthur is a soldier, and used to dangers and narrow escapes. We cannot expect him to look upon such things as we do. I doubt not he does in his heart give earnest thanks to his Heavenly Father for this deliverance."

"Indeed I do, dame!" said Arthur, more gravely. "I am, as you say, a soldier, besides being an outlaw and an exile, and one becomes used to danger as to other things, such as cold, hunger, and home-sickness. Nevertheless, I do,

as you well say, give earnest thanks to God for His mercies, and not least for raising me up such kind friends at my utmost need; and I trust, if He delivers me from this present peril, to serve Him more faithfully than I have ever done before."

"It is well spoken, and may He who giveth grace send you strength according to your need!" said Dame Sprat. "But, Winifred, it is time you were on your way home. Your good mother will be uneasy at your delay."

"If Mr. Carew will give me the message for my lady," said Winifred.

"Oh, aye! Tell my good sister to run no risk upon my account, and to make no move till Sir Edward has gone up to London. After that, if she can in some way furnish me with a horse, a small quantity of ready money, and a suit of clothes, I can easily find friends, who will aid me to escape from some of the western ports. I would gladly see Margaret if it could be managed, but I would not risk bringing her into trouble or danger."

"I do not think it is her own trouble or danger which my lady fears," said Winifred; "and I am sure she has no lack of affection for you."

"I know, I know!" interrupted Arthur. "My

sister cannot do as she would, and I like you the better for being so ready to defend her. But you will come again before long, Winifred?"

"The day after to-morrow," said Winifred, smiling. "You have abundance of provisions till that time, so you will not miss me."

"It is not the provisions I am thinking of, but yourself, my saucy little maid, as you well know," said Arthur, smiling in his turn. "Your face is a medicine for home-sickness."

"Now I will not have the child's head turned with your courtier's compliments, Master Arthur," interposed Dame Sprat. "Thank your mother for her gifts, Winifred, and also good Mrs. Alwright. Stay, my child, one word more! If you go to the Hall again while he is there, I would have you endeavor carefully to avoid Colonel Kirke. He is a bold, bad man, and not one to do you any good; nor do I think him likely to pay much respect to Sir Edward's family. Keep you close to my lady or Mrs. Alwright, and do not by any means stray in the park or gardens by yourself. You may not understand me, nor is it needful you should, but I have reasons for what I say. Now once more good-night, and may the Lord bless thee!"

"That is a marvellous little maid!" said Arthur,

after Winifred had departed. "It is no wonder that my sister loves her."

"She is indeed a wonderfully gracious child!" replied Dame Sprat. "She comes of a good family, and hath been well taught both by her mother and by my lady, who keeps her much in her company. I cannot but think, however, that she owes much of her peculiar goodness and purity to a higher teacher than either. She is truly a child of grace and led by the Spirit of God. He would be a wretch indeed who should sully so pure a flower, yet I sometimes fear lest her great beauty should lead her into danger. I would Colonel Kirke had never set his evil eyes upon her face."

"He would indeed be a wretch who could harm her," said Arthur; "but Kirke has done even worse things, unless he is greatly belied. The protection of the queen herself would be no shield to one on whom he fixed his fancy."

"I dare say not," returned the dame, dryly. "Royal protection hath not been particularly favorable to virtue in these latter days."

"Truly not! But you say Winifred is of good family? I thought she belonged to some of the farmers hereabout."

"Her father is a sailor, the younger son of old Master Evans of the Stonehill farm, than whom no one is more respected in these parts. Her mother belongs to an ancient but somewhat decayed Devonshire family, of whom I dare say you know something—the Coffins of North Devon. She is, not distantly, related to your sister's first husband, Colonel Winthrop. I do not know whether my lady is aware of it, but indeed I think she must be, for this child is wonderfully like him, both in face and manner. He was a gracious youth, and one who, my husband used to say, had more of the root of the matter in him than many of those who made more words about it. I suppose you do not remember your brother Winthrop, Master Arthur?"

"Hardly, dame, since he died the very year that I was born," replied Arthur; "but I have seen his portrait in my sister's cabinet, when I was a child. It had always a great charm for me—partly, I suppose, because I fancied some mystery attached to t. Do you know Winifred's age?"

"She is fifteen, though she looks so much younger that she might easily pass for eleven. I trust, Master Arthur, I have no need to remind you"——

"I understand you, dame," said Arthur, coloring

high, as Dame Sprat paused, with her eyes fixed upon his face. "I cannot blame you for the thought, considering what are the manners of the time, but believe me you do me great wrong. I have done many things in my life-time which had been better left undone, but I should be a fiend indeed if I were capable of doing aught that should injure yon fair child. I am right glad my sister has taken such a fancy to her for both their sakes, since Winifred could not have a kinder or more judicious friend, and I sometimes fear my poor Margaret hath but a dull life of it. But our supper is ready, and a savory one it is, thanks to good old Alwright. I am in a hurry to see if her sausages are as good as ever. Here, Mistress Puss, come and have your share."

Winifred found Jack in a very doleful mood.

"What made you stay so long?" he murmured. 'I think it is too bad in you to leave me for that old woman!"

"I have only been away three hours, Jack," replied Winifred. "The poor old dame is down with rheumatism, and has no one to attend upon her, while you have all the house to wait upon you."

"It is all the fault of that old magpie. Grandfather ought to have had the tree cut down!"

"It was not the tree's fault, nor the poor magpie's either," remarked Priscy, who had just come in. "I am sure the poor bird never asked you to rob her nest. You should have minded the master and left the tree alone, and then you might have been helping to gather the apples this day, instead of lying here groaning and making ever so much trouble."

"Well, never mind, Priscy!" said Winifred, gently. "Jack will be wiser another time. See here, Jack, what fine apples I picked up as I came through the orchard. I will ask mother to let me roast one for you, and when I go up to the Hall to-morrow I will ask Mrs. Alwright to send you something nice. I am sure she will, for she said she was very sorry for you. Come now, don't cry any more, and I will read you a story out of my new book."

Winnie's gentleness and kindness finally soothed poor Jack and got him to sleep; and Winnie then delivered a small lecture to Priscilla.

"You should not tease poor Jack, now that he is ill and helpless. It only makes him fret, and I am sure it does him no good. You are not always

careful yourself any more than Jack. Do you remember how you would go to Bridgewater fair, in the rain, despite all my mother and grandfather could say? You would not have thought it very kind, when you were sick with your cold and ague afterwards, if my mother had all the time reproached you with the trouble you gave, though your illness was far more inconvenient than Jack's, coming as it did in the midst of sheep-shearing.'

"And that is true indeed, Mrs. Winifred!" said Priscilla, a little conscience-stricken. "The dear mistress—she never gave me a word all the time, and nursed me as I had been her own sister. But then, dear me, I never expect to be as good as you and the mistress."

"I don't see why not, Priscy. I don't see any reason why you should not be as good as the best saint that ever lived!"

"No, I dare say you don't, because you judge other folks by yourself; but, Mrs. Winnie, my dear, I will not tease poor Jack any more. I will go to the mistress this minute, and ask her if I may not make the poor lad a nice custard against he wakes. I am sure a custard cannot hurt him."

Permission was given, and Jack and Priscilla were soon good friends over the custard. When

every one else had gone to bed, Winifred related to her mother the adventure of the afternoon. Dame Magdalen shuddered at thought of the peril.

"It was indeed a wonderful escape, and you are a wonderful child," said she. "I fear I could never have kept myself quiet as you did."

"I do not think we any of us know what we can do till we try," said Winifred. "When I look back over this week, and think of all that has happened, it seems to me that I am hardly the same person I was last Sunday—I feel so much older I wonder what the reason is?"

"'Tis the care, child! Care and trouble make young folks old, and you have heretofore known little of either. My poor grandmother's hair turned gray all in a single week while her mother was in prison, and she was a young woman not thirty years old. Those were fearful times, and who knows but we may have the same back again, since the king is a papist, and by all account as hard-hearted and as much led by the Jesuits as Queen Mary herself!"

"Do you think all papists are hard-hearted, mother?" asked Winifred. "I have heard Priscilla say that the Lady Strafford, with whom her mother lived, was a kind, good lady."

"No doubt there are good and bad among them, as among others. The king has had provocation, too, that cannot be denied, both of late, and in the old times of the Popish Plot. Nevertheless, that does not excuse what has been done in his name in this and other places. Well, Winifred, you have become entangled in this matter by no fault of yours, and I do not see but you must carry it through. It seems hard, or at least strange, that you should have been allowed to fall into such trouble and danger, only for doing your duty and aiding the distressed.

"I think it often happens so," said Winifred. "The apostles were all put to death for teaching people the way of salvation, and you know, mother," she added, with reverence, "our Lord Himself laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

"True, my daughter! That is the real spirit of Christ. I trust, however, that you may not be called to any such sacrifice. Now, to bed and to sleep, my child, and do not dream of the dangers you have passed."

CHAPTER VII.

THE DISGUISE.

THE next day Winifred went up to the Hall, as usual, promising Jack to bring him something good, and not to remain away longer than she could help. As she entered the court-yard she saw several horses standing before the door, and it was with no little satisfaction that she learned from one of the servants the news that Sir Edward was going up to London that very day, along with Colonel Kirke, who had been sent for by the king. She was conscious of a great lightening of her heart as she skipped along the passages to Mrs. Alwright's room, and then watched from the window the two gentlemen mount their horses and ride away, followed by their servants and baggage-horses. Presently Mrs. Alwright entered, considerably heated and flurried.

"You dear child, are you here already?" she exclaimed, kissing Winifred on both cheeks, and then dropping into her chair. "Dear heart, I am run off my feet! I don't think I have sat down to-day, and I was up all night, getting things ready for Sir Edward's journey; and glad I am that they are gone! Only to think that Sir Edward and that colonel should actually have been in Dame Sprat's cottage while you were there, and they never suspected anything either. I promise you my lady turned as white as a sheet when they spoke of it at supper. I could see her face in the great Venice glass as I stood behind her chair. My heart went thump, thump—it seemed as if every one in the room might have heard it. I was afraid my dear lady would betray herself by fainting or some such thing, but I need not have been alarmed. She just drank a glass of water, and then said, as quietly as possible, 'The dame must be growing very old and infirm. By your permission, Sir Edward, I would gladly make her more comfortable by sending her a load of fuel and other provisions before winter. I knew her well when I was a young girl at home. Then Sir Edward hesitated and said something about her husband's having been a sturdy rebel, and herself a Puritan; upon which Colonel Kirke

spoke up and said, with his great, coarse laugh, that a good many folks were rebels in Cromwell's time who were king's men now; which touched Sir Edward, as I suppose he meant it should, my dear. Then he went on to say that he would take it kind of my lady if she would befriend Dame Sprat, seeing the good woman had been kind to him in former days. So then Sir Edward could do no less after that than to tell my lady to do what she pleased; and when my lady said she would ride over some day to the cottage, and see what the old woman most needed, he said that would be a good plan, if the ride were not too long or too rough for her; which I believe it was for nothing else but to please Colonel Kirke, my dear. No, I won't say that either, for Sir Edward is a kind man to the poor—I will say that for him!"

"I think he is," said Winifred.

"But now tell me all about it, for I am dying to know," said Mrs. Alwright, "and I will sit here and rest a bit."

Winifred related the story, interrupted by many exclamations of wonder, pity, and admiration from Mrs. Alwright.

"Dear, dear! Well, I do declare! I never heard the like! It is like a story out of a play or a

romance--not that you should ever touch plays and romances, my dear, for they are all a pack of wickedness and abominations—at least all that are written now-a-days. Well, I am truly thankful that it has all turned out so well, and that Colonel Kirke is going away. The king's messenger came last night just as they were rising from supper, and Colonel Kirke was not very well pleased, I could see that plainly. I fancy he has some game afoot that he did not care to leave, but what, I do not know nor want to know. He is a bad, impudent man, if he were twice the king's officer, and his servants are as bad as their master, enough to turn any decent house upside down. Well, so Sir Edward said he would ride with him for company, since he must go next week at any rate; and we have been all in a bustle, my lady and I, getting him ready and making biscuits and gingerbread for the road. Fortunately his clothes are all in order; whereby, my dear, you may see the great importance of never letting things fall behindhand as I am often telling you, and your mother the same, no doubt. And here I am, keeping you all this time!" cried Alwright, as if she had just thought of it; "and my lady said you were to come to her directly you came in! So run up-

stairs, as quickly as you can! You will find my lady in her closet, where you went before."

Winifred stopped only to lay aside her cloak and smooth her hair, and to prefer her humble request to Mrs. Alwright for something good for poor Jack.

"Dear me! Yes, to be sure, poor lad! He shall have some of the nice biscuits I made last night, and a pot of my gooseberry jam. You may tell your mother I do not think a little more generous diet would do him any harm after this. Go along to my lady, sweetheart, and I will have your work ready against you come back. I am going to teach you the lace stitch this morning."

Winifred found Lady Peckham in her closet, as Alwright had said. The great red velvet Bible lay open before her, and her eyes looked as if she had been weeping. Winifred paused at the door and made her courtesy, but my lady beckoned her to come nearer, and kissed her forehead.

"So you came near having a surprise yesterday, sweetheart! Where was my brother all the time?"

"In the shed, my lady, under the fagot stack. The dog smelt him and scratched at the door, but the dame said it was the cat he was after, and begged the gentlemen not to let her be hurt, so

they thought nothing of it. But indeed, my lady, I was horribly frightened, though I tried not to show it, lest they should suspect something. I could not help crying after they were gone and the danger was past."

"I do not wonder!" said Lady Peckham, shuddering. "It was a severe trial, and the thought of it makes me tremble even now. How shall I ever repay you, Winifred, for all you have done for me and mine?"

"I need no repayment, my lady," replied Winifred. "I have done no more than my duty, and you have ever been a most kind friend to me, both in noticing me yourself, and in allowing Mrs. Alwright to teach me so many things."

"You are an apt scholar, and you have had a higher Teacher than either myself or Alwright," said Lady Peckham. "You might well say that He would give you strength at your need. Without it you could never have come safely through such an ordeal as that of yesterday. And now tel me about my brother. How does he?"

"Well, my lady, and in good spirits; but I think he is very venturesome. The dame was ill with rheumatism yesterday, and nothing would do but Master Arthur must go out and catch a fish

for her, and then cook it himself, and tidy up the cottage. He was sweeping when I went in, and if I had not been there to give him warning, Sir Edward and Colonel Kirke would have come right in upon him. I tried to persuade him not to do the like again, but he treated the whole affair more like a jest than anything else."

"I dare say. That was always his way, but he feels deeply, for all that. Did he send me no message?"

Winifred repeated it faithfully. Lady Peckham wiped the tears from her eyes.

"Poor heart, I see he thinks I do not care for him! He little knows the weight which has rested upon my heart all these years that he has been in exile, and yet I think he might trust my love. But now, Winifred, I wish to consult you upon another matter. Sir Edward has given me leave to ride over and see Dame Sprat, and I wish to go while my brother is there. It does not seem to me that I can bear to let him go abroad again without once seeing him, but I do not see how to bring it about. I do not know the way, and it would never do to take one of our men. Can you think of anything?"

Winifred considered with a passing thought how

strange it was that such a simple child as she should be called to assist and advise such great people as Lady Peckham and Mr. Carew!

"You do not always take a man with you when you ride about to visit the poor folks, my lady. You might come to our house as if to see Jack, and I could guide you through our lane and across the heath to the dame's cottage. I as often go that way as the other. It is a somewhat rough ride, but your pony is sure-footed, and I dare say you will not mind for once, in a way."

"No, indeed! I think the plan a good one, and can see no objection to it. Now, as to the disguise for my brother. I think we must call Alwright to our council for that matter."

Mrs. Alwright was called and consulted. "Why, my lady, as to that, the disguise is all ready made to our hand, as a body may say. There are the clothes of the chaplain who died last year at the Hall. He had neither kith nor kin that I could hear of, poor man, so I put all his things away in lavender and camphor, thinking that they would do a turn for some poor scholar,—which shows the great advantage of saving things, since one always does find a use for them, sooner or later,"

added Alwright, improving the occasion for Winifred's benefit, as usual.

"True!" said Lady Peckham. "Poor Mr. Mills must have been about Arthur's size, I should say."

"Just about the same, my lady, and there are his doublet and cassock, his wig, spectacles, and all, even to a thick horseman's cloak which he wore when he came here, and the saddle-bags which held his worldly goods, and room to spare too, poor soul!"

"Nothing could be more to our purpose," said Lady Peckham. "Arthur could always support any character which it pleased him to assume, and no one will take him for anything but a clergyman on his travels. But how shall we get the clothes conveyed to him when all is done?"

"Nothing could be easier, my lady," replied Alwright, evidently pleased with her own cleverness as a conspirator. "I can do them up in a small bundle, and you can take it on your horse as if it were something for the dame herself. You have often done the like for poor folks, so no one will think it strange."

"Very good!" said Lady Peckham. "There is one difficulty removed, but I see another and a greater one in the way of Arthur's escape. Money

I have in plenty, but how and where to find a horse? Sir Edward has taken with him all the beasts except the old coach-horses and my pony, and besides Arthur could not possibly take a horse from here without exciting suspicion. What say you, Winifred? Can you propose anything?"

"I think, if you please, my lady, we had better consult my grandfather about that matter. He breeds a great many horses and knows all about them. I think he will find a way to help us out."

"Well, be it so," said Lady Peckham. "To-morrow is Sunday, and we will all go to church as usual, and try to gather strength for the work to come. On Monday, Winifred, I will come to your house, and you shall be my guide across the heath to the dame's cottage. Meantime consult your good grandfather about the horse, that all may be arranged as speedily as may be. I shall not know an easy moment till my brother is beyond seas and in safety."

CHAPTER IX

SUNDAY.

WINIFRED'S first thought on waking was, "Oh, how glad I am that this is Sunday, and I *cannot* do anything except go to church and wait upon Jack!" Never had the day of rest, always pleasant to her, been more welcome than after this week of excitement and fatigue. She slipped out of bed without waking her mother, and went to the window. How wonderfully calm and quiet everything seemed! The plow-horses, turned out in the field near the house, seemed to know that no work would be required of them this day, and stood with their heads together looking over the gate. The cows were collected in their lane, waiting to be milked and turned out. The cider-press, which had been groaning and creaking for several days, was quiet under its little roof of thatch;

the very poultry seemed to make less noise than usual, and a pretty robin was singing his autumn ong on the top of the porch. Winifred drew a long breath, and again repeated to herself, "Oh, how glad I am that this is Sunday!"

After breakfast and the finishing up of the morning's work, arose the question who was to go to church, and who was to stay at home with Jack. Priscilla volunteered to stay, and was not at all pleased when Jack declared, peevishly, that he didn't want her—he wanted Winnie.

"Priscy will just keep scolding at me all the time, and she can't read either. She has to spell all the words. I want Winnie to read to me in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and about David, and Goliath, and Samson."

"Master Jack is very fond of hearing about all sorts of brave doings," said Priscilla. "He takes his bravery out in that way, I think. As for Miss Winnie's new book, 'tis no fit book to read on Sunday, in my opinion. 'Tis more like a fairy tale."

"O no, Priscy! It is just as good a Sunday book as 'The Whole Duty of Man,'" said Winifred. "I will explain it all to you, some day."

Priscy was still privately of opinion that a book

which was so interesting could not possibly be fit for Sunday, but she did not like to contradict Winifred, whom she looked upon as a kind of saint; so she contented herself with declaring that there were no such books when she was young —which was undoubtedly true—and that my Lady Colville (with whom she had once lived, and who was her great authority upon all occasions) had severely reproved my Lady Alice and had kept her upon bread and water for two days because she found her reading in the 'Arcadia' on Sunday evening.

"The 'Arcadia' is a story-book, I know," said Winifred. "I read out of it to Mrs. Alwright, and it is all about shepherds, and shepherdesses, and knights. That is not at all like the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' Priscy."

Priscy could not see the difference, but said she supposed Mrs. Winifred knew best.

"Of course she does," said Jack; "and you will stay with me, won't you, Winnie?"

Winifred had particularly wished to go to church. She always enjoyed the services very much, and she felt as though she specially needed their soothing and strengthening influence, after the worry and excitement of the week past; but she saw that

Jack had set his heart upon her reading to him, and she knew that if he and Priscy were left together, they would do nothing but quarrel all the morning.

"Well, never mind, Jack, I will stay with you this morning, and go to church in the afternoon,' said she. "It is very dull to lie in bed and do nothing. I found that out when I had the fever."

"Yes, and very much Master Jack put himself out for you then, did he not?" said Priscilla. "He would not so much as go down to the spring in the evening when you wanted some cool water, because he was afraid of the bogle. Suppose Miss Winifred should say she was afraid to stay alone in the house with you for fear of robbers, what then, Master Jack?"

Jack, having no better answer at hand, began to cry.

"Hush, hush, Priscy!" said Winifred, gravely. "I am sure that is not proper talk for Sunday. Did not you promise me that you would not tease Jack any more, while he was sick?"

"Well, he is enough to aggravate anybody. But I won't say any more, only next time I hope he will remember and do as he would be done by, that's all!" And Priscilla flounced out of the

room, and went to "clean herself," as she said, for church.

"Don't say any more, Jack!" said Winifred; "you will make your head ache. You need not think so much of what Priscy says. You know she would do anything in the world for you."

"What do I care about her doing for me, when she plagues me all the time!" sobbed Jack. "She is always saying the hatefulest things she can think of, and then when I am *mad*, she begins to tell what she has done for me. I would rather people would never do anything for me, than that they should be always twitting me with it afterwards!"

"I have felt a good deal so myself," said Winifred. "It is very hard to be grateful for favors when they are thrown in one's face. Somehow one feels as if one had paid for them all that they were worth. But don't let us think anything more about it, lest we should spoil our Sunday. How far have you got in the book?"

"Just to where he came to the lions."

"But, Winnie," said Jack, with some little trepidation in his voice, "you are not afraid to stay all alone with me while they go to church, are you? You don't really think there is any danger?"

"Of course not!" said Winifred, "what is there to fear?"

"Oh, nothing—only—I wish Roger or grandfather would stay at home with us!"

"Roger has gone home to see his sick mother, and I am sure you would not want grandfather to stay at home. Just think, how long it is since he has been able to go to church before! What harm can possibly happen to us?"

Jack didn't know, only it was very disagreeable to be left alone with nobody but a little girl to take care of him. "Suppose the robbers should come, or suppose there should be a thunder-storm, or such an apparition as Dame Rogers saw when she was all alone in the house!"

"Or suppose one of the lions should come out of the book and bite you, which is quite as likely," said Winifred, laughing. "You are always talking about going to sea with my father, Jack. What sort of sailor will you make if you are afraid of storms at home, with a good roof over your head? Or what would you do if the ship were attacked by the Barbary pirates, as the Princess of Orange was once? Dear Jack, do try and not be so afraid of everything!"

"I don't see how I can help it," said Jack;

"and I am not afraid of everything, either. If I had been I should not have gone up the tree after the magpie. But I don't like to be alone here, and I think grandfather might stay at home."

"I would not say anything about it; they will only laugh at you," said Winifred. "I will read to you, and then they will be at home again before you can think."

The dread of being laughed at by his grandfather prevailed for the time over Jack's other fears, and he saw the family set out for church without making any more objections; but when they were gone, his terror revived. He insisted on Winifred's fastening all the doors and windows, and calling in the great house-dog to guard them; and she had no sooner done so, and settled herself down to read, than he concluded, after all, it would be safer to have Trusty in the yard, as he could give them notice by barking if any danger approached. Then he interrupted her once more to ask her if she did not hear a noise in the outer kitchen.

"I hear the kittens chasing one another and the cat mewing to them. I suppose Priscy shut them in to look out for the mice. Now, Jack, do listen!" And Winnie read on:

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"'Now, before he had gone far, he entered into a very narrow passage, which was about a furlong off the porter's lodge, and, looking very narrowly before him as he went, he spied two lions in the way. 'Now,' thought he' "——

"Winnie, do listen!" said Jack. "I am sure I hear some one on the porch!"

"I dare say it is only Trusty," said Winifred. "I will look out of the window and see."

"No, don't!" whispered Jack. "What if it should be a robber, and he should see you? Don't stir, and then he will not know that there is anybody in the house! There, do you hear that?" And Jack seized hold of Winifred's hand, and hid his face in the bed-clothes, as a man's foot was distinctly heard upon the stones outside.

"Dear Jack, don't be so scared!" said Winifred. "I don't think there is any danger. I dare say it is only some traveller wishing to inquire his way, or perhaps one of the neighbors has been taken ill. Let me peep out of the window and see."

But Jack would not allow her to move. He had fully persuaded himself that the stranger was captain of a band of robbers, and that his grandfather would come home in time to find him and his

sister robbed and murdered, or perhaps carried off and sold as slaves.

"It is some one whom Trusty knows," said Winifred, after listening a little. "Just hear how the old dog whines and barks, exactly as he does when father comes home. O Jack! suppose it should be father himself! It might be, you know. He might have set out from Plymouth the day before yesterday, and been delayed on the road. Do, Jack, let me look out and see!"

No, Jack would not let her stir. He knew that it was not his father, though it might very likely be his father's ghost, come to tell them that he had been murdered on the way home. More likely, however, it was a gypsy, who it was well known knew how to tame any dog, however fierce. He grew so agitated that Winifred was afraid he might injure his broken arm in his struggles, and though she felt almost certain that the stranger was her father, she did not again try to move till the family came home. It did seem a very long time to her as well as to Jack before they were heard approaching. Then Winifred heard her mother's voice in a tone of joyful surprise, and then another which she knew right well.

"It *is* father, as I told you!" said she, as she

hastened to unbar the door. "What will he think of us for not letting him in?"

"Why, Winifred, what has come over you all at once?" said her grandfather. "Why did you not look out and see who was there? Here has been your father sitting in the porch this hour and more, thinking, to be sure, as all the doors and windows are fastened, there would be nobody at home. That is but a poor welcome to give your father, child!"

"Never mind," said the sailor, as he took Winifred in his arms. "We don't expect little girls to be very brave, and the many frightful things which have happened of late are enough to make cowards of older and stronger people than Winifred. But, sweetheart, you used not to be afraid of anything!"

Winifred did not say it was Jack who had prevented her from opening the door. She thought the truth would come out quite soon enough, and so it did, not by any good will of Jack's, however. He was in no hurry to let his father know that he was afraid, and laughed as heartily as anybody at the idea of Winifred's barring the door to keep out her own father.

"Of course you know *I* could not get out of bed to open it!" said he; "so there we were listening and wondering who it could possibly be. You

would not have stayed in the porch if I had been able to get about."

Unluckily for poor Jack, this speech was overheard by Priscilla, who had just come in behind the others. She pounced upon him directly.

"Yes, if you had been about, no doubt it would have been just right. I dare say it was you who held Miss Winifred fast, and would not let her stir, and thought your father was all the thieves and robbers that ever were in Bridgewater jail. Now wasn't it so, Miss Winifred?"

"Never mind, Priscy," replied Winifred, making her a sign to stop. "My father is in now, and what does it matter?"

"It matters a great deal!" said her father. "Now, Winifred, tell me the truth. Was it yourself or Jack who was afraid to open the door?"

"It was Jack, father, said Winifred, in a low tone, and casting a reproachful glance at Priscilla.

"And you, Jack, threw the blame upon your sister! Oh, my lad, for shame! It is bad enough to be a coward, but it is far worse to try to shift the blame of your own cowardice upon another person's shoulders. I see you have been young master at home too long. To sea you go, my lad, as soon as ever your arm is well. The ship is to be laid up

for repairs, and by the time she is finished you will be quite recovered."

Jack did not know whether to be glad or sorry at this decision. He was pleased with the thought of leaving home, where he often fancied that every one was very unjust and unkind to him; and he liked the notion of being a sailor, and seeing foreign countries. But, on the other hand, he had a great dread of the dangers of the sea, and he stood not a little in awe of his father. However, he comforted himself with reflecting that a great many things might happen in the course of six months, and he might never go after all; while, in the mean time, he might have the pleasure of talking about his prospects to all the boys in the village. So he finally concluded to make the best of matters, especially as they could not be helped. It was observable that Jack's recovery went on much more rapidly after his father's return. The next day but one he was up and dressed, and going about with his arm in a sling; and he even offered to carry Dame Sprat's milk to her, an offer which was dryly refused by his mother, with the remark that she had no milk to spare, to be thrown away the first time Jack saw his own shadow on the ground.

CHAPTER X.

THE ESCAPE.

WINIFRED had talked over with her grandfather on Saturday night the question of procuring a horse for Arthur Carew; and Master Evans, after some consideration, had decided that he could spare the black mare, which was a steady, strong beast, and more suitable in appearance for a clergyman than any of the colts. He told Winifred that it would be best for Arthur, after putting on his disguise, to come himself for the mare. There would be nothing remarkable in his doing so, as many people came to the Stonehill farm to buy horses, and it would be a safer course than letting any of the men either at the Hall or the farm have a guess at the secret.

"You are sure it will be quite safe for him, grandfather?" said Winifred.

"Yes, I think so. Nobody about here has seen Master Arthur Carew for many years, and so far as I can hear, no one has mentioned his name in connection with the Duke of Monmouth. Indeed, there was a rumor some time ago that he had died in foreign parts."

"He went by a different name, I know," said Winifred. "He called himself Fullerton."

"I am glad he had at least that much sense," said Master Evans. "It was a most mad undertaking for all concerned."

"Master Arthur only came along because of his affection for the duke," replied Winifred, feeling somehow that she did not like to hear Arthur blamed.

"That may be some excuse, but it does not justify him. We have no right to let our friends drag us into doing what we know to be foolish and wrong. However, there is no help for it now. I think we have hit upon the best way of managing the matter: Mr. Arthur can come as if from the Hall, and if any one sees him, he will be taken for some poor scholar whom my lady has been helping on his way. You had better tell my lady all this yourself. I should say, the sooner the matter was managed the better."

As her grandfather advised, Winifred disclosed the plan to Lady Peckham, who arrived on her pony the next day, followed by a serving-man bearing a good-sized bundle, and dismounted to see Jack. Jack was very sensible of the honor, and also of the cakes my lady brought him, and listened with all due respect and submission to the lecture she read him upon doing as he was bid and keeping the fifth commandment.

"And now, Winifred, if you are ready to guide me to the cottage, I think we will dismiss Thomas," said her ladyship, rising. "I want him to ride into Bridgewater and do some errands there. Mrs. Alwright will give you your commissions, Thomas, and it is full time you were on your way."

Thomas was well enough pleased to be excused from attending his lady to the cottage of Dame Sprat, whom, like many other people, he looked upon as a kind of white witch, or at least as knowing more than any Christian ought to know. He made his reverence, therefore, and departed on his errand, and Lady Peckham prepared to mount her horse once more.

"Whose voice is that?" she exclaimed, starting, as a man's voice was heard without. "It is surely not your grandfather's!"

Jack saw the start and the change of color, and treasured them up as some sort of excuse for his own terrors of the day before—terrors of which he was more and more ashamed the more he thought of them. He little guessed what cause for alarm the poor lady had, since, of course, no one had dared to let him into the secret.

"It is only my father, madam," said Winifred. "He came home yesterday, and understanding that your ladyship was to be here to-day, he desired to pay his duty to you."

Lady Peckham was a true lady, both by nature and education, as well as by name, and though she was all the time impatient to be gone, she listened graciously while Gilbert Evans, in few but sensible words, expressed his gratitude for her kindness to his daughter. He ended by requesting her ladyship's acceptance of a valuable and curious piece of China vase which he had brought from the East. Lady Peckham was really pleased with the present, which was of a kind highly valued at that time, and she was also pleased with the feeling which had evidently prompted it. So there was great satisfaction upon all sides, and it was arranged that Gilbert should himself carry the vase to the Hall next day.

I will not attempt to describe the meeting between the brother and sister, nor that between the lady and the old woman whom her father had so deeply injured, and who had had such a rare opportunity of returning good for evil. It is enough to say that the dame welcomed her guest with true Christian politeness, and that Arthur greeted his sister with the warmest affection—that Winifred kept watch at the door while the interview lasted, and that it was settled that Arthur should come up to the Hall early the next morning, that he might go from thence to Master Evans' house. The brother and sister had so many things to say to each other, that it was not till Dame Sprat herself warned the lady of the danger of such a long visit that they could make up their minds to separate. On farther consideration it was decided that Arthur should not risk being recognized by any of the servants at the Hall, but that he should come at once to the farm and thence depart without farther leave-taking.

The next morning Winifred was at work in the garden, gathering various kinds of herbs and seeds. It was a task in which she took great delight, finding much pleasure in observing the forms and markings of the leaves, and the different ways in

which the seeds were provided for. She was so busy that she did not look up till she heard her father's voice close beside her.

"Where is your grandfather, daughter? Here is a gentleman who desires to see him about buying a horse."

Winifred looked up with a start. She could hardly believe her eyes. Could this middle-aged clergyman in spectacles, with his full periwig, flapped hat, and somewhat worn black suit—could this be Arthur Carew?

"Is this your daughter, my friend?" said the stranger, in formal, measured tones. "Truly, a fine child, and one, my Lady Peckham tells me, of great promise. I think I have seen you with my lady at the Hall, have I not, my little maid?" he asked, while the least bit of a roguish twinkle showed itself in his eyes. "But I dare say you do not remember me."

Winifred could only courtesy and say that she remembered the gentleman very well.

"Will it please you to walk into the house, and wait for my father, sir?" said Gilbert Evans. "He is in the house field, but I will soon call him."

"With your good leave I will repose here," replied the stranger, seating himself on the bench

under the great pear-tree. "This soft autumn air is grateful to my senses, and I am somewhat weary with my walk. And so you did know me, Winifred, after all?" he added, as soon as Gilbert Evans was out of hearing.

"I don't think I should have done so, if I had not known you were coming," answered Winifred, surveying him from head to foot. "No, I am sure I should not. The wig seems to alter the shape of your face entirely."

"So much the better! Now, Winifred, that we are alone, I wish to say a few serious words to you. You have saved my life and the credit of my family. Whether we shall ever meet again, God only knows, but I shall never forget you, and you must always remember me. Will you promise to do so?"

Winifred tried to keep back her tears, as she said she should never forget Mr. Arthur as long as she lived.

"I am but a wanderer—a hunted exile, without home or country," resumed Arthur, "and you are hardly more than a child even now; but if ever I return, I shall come to find you. I must not even write to you, since it would not be safe for either, but I shall think of you, and meantime I want you to wear this."

He took from his breast a beautiful little locket and chain, decorated with a crest and figures in black and green enamel.

"This locket contains my mother's and sister's hair, and in all my wanderings I have never parted with it. Put it round your neck under your kerchief—so. Now, have you nothing to give me in exchange—no little silver penny or sixpence?"

"I have only this," said Winifred, taking from her pocket the broad, thin Moorish gold coin which Colonel Kirke had given her.

"That will do, nicely. Now farewell, my own Winifred! Be as much as may be with my sister, and learn all you can of her and of good Alwright. Give them my last love. Pray for me, sweetheart! You and the good dame, between you, taught me that the Christian religion is a reality. There, I hear your good grandfather coming."

Winifred stood feeling like one in a dream, while Roger led out the black mare from the stable. The stranger looked her over, and seemed to talk about the price, while the saddle was put on her and the stirrups adjusted. At last all was settled, The stranger mounted, bowed politely to her grandfather, put something into old Roger's hand, and rode away, turning at the last point where he

could see Winifred and raising his hat. Then she drew a long breath and went back to her work, wondering how it was that all the interest seemed to have gone out of it, and that she could think of nothing but the last glimpse of Arthur Carew.

"The master have sold the black mare, Miss Winifred, and the saddle and bridle he bought of the Widow Oldmixon!" said Roger, presently, coming through the garden. "The gentleman as bought them paid all in gold and gave me a crown-piece to boot. He was a bookish-looking sort of man like a parson, but he seemed a goodish judge of a horse too, and he rode away more like a dragoon than a scholar, to my mind."

There was an uneasy feeling in Winifred's heart that night. She was not sure that she had done right in exchanging tokens with Mr. Carew in that way, and for the first time in all her life she felt a certain disinclination to open her mind to her mother. But the life-long habit of openness prevailed, and at bed-time, the usual hour for confidences, she showed the locket to her mother and told her all about it.

Dame Magdalen was not a little disturbed. "Beshrew the man and his courtier's compliments!" said she to herself. "I wish he had gone any-

where else for a horse!" But as she looked at Winifred's steadfast, modest gray eyes, she could not think any harm had yet been done. "I am heartily glad he is out of the way!" was her second comment; but she only said: "There was no harm in it. Mr. Carew naturally wished to give you a token, and I suppose he had nothing else which he thought would please a young maid. As to the exchanging of tokens, that is but one of his court fashions. I dare say he will spend your gold piece at the first tavern."

"Then I may keep the locket, mother?" said Winifred, somehow feeling that her heart was not particularly lightened by this view of the case.

"Yes, if you please, child, so you do not show it. It is too valuable an ornament for one in your station."

There was no danger of her showing it, Winifred thought. Neither would she bring herself to believe that Mr. Carew would spend her gold piece at the first tavern. She had slept alone in the little room over the porch since her father's arrival, and that night, for almost the first time in her life, she cried herself to sleep.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BEGINNING OF CHANGES.

THE next three or four months were months of sad suspense to all the friends of Arthur Carew To Winifred they were the longest she had ever spent. All the excitement and adventure of her life had been crowded into ten days, and now that they were over, it seemed hard to return to the little common duties of everyday life—to have nothing more important on her mind, when she awoke in the morning, than feeding the chickens or carrying her daily portion to Dame Sprat. Even her lessons with Mrs. Alwright had lost part of their charm, now that there were no messages to carry back and forth between my lady and Mr. Arthur—now that she was no longer a counsellor and in some sort a heroine, but had sunk into plain little Winifred Evans again. In truth a great

change had passed over Winifred. She had passed that place "where the brooks and rivers meet." She had from a simple child become a woman, with all a woman's cares and feelings, living the best part of her life in another; and she could no more go back to what she was before the memorable night when she walked over the fields with Arthur Carew, than she could return to the days when she played contentedly for hours with a doll and a few bits of broken earthenware.

Winifred had now to learn what all women must learn, sooner or later, that it often requires as much courage, though of a somewhat different kind, to live one's common every-day life, as it does to risk that life in some great danger or adventure. She sometimes found it hard not to be pettish and impatient with Jack when he boasted of what he would do when he was a sailor, and she sometimes found herself looking with disgust upon the little cares and the common every-day work which occupied her from morning till night, without seeming, after all, to bring anything to pass.

But Winifred was too truly a Christian, and too strongly confirmed in the habit of honest self-examination, to allow this frame of mind to become a habit. She soon perceived that she was growing fretful

and discontented, and even moody and impatient of the society of those about her, and she set herself resolutely to remedy the evil, by earnest prayer, and by a steady, straightforward analysis of her own feelings and conduct.

"God has placed me where I am," she argued with herself. "He hath called me to this state of life, and the work I am obliged to do every day—feeding the fowls, sweeping and scouring, waiting upon my grandfather and Jack, and helping Priscilla in the dairy—all this is as much His work, as saving Mr. Carew's life or helping my lady. And if I let myself be unfaithful and discontented in these little matters, just because they do not seem to come to anything, what right have I to expect strength when any great temptation comes to try me? And if I sit thinking of all that has happened, and of Mr. Arthur Carew, when I ought to be saying my prayers—and I know I have done so a good many times—I have no right to expect my devotions will seem as pleasant to me as they have done before. I might take pattern of my lady about that. Of course the suspense about Mr. Arthur must be much worse for her than for me, yet she seems to go about everything just as usual—visiting the poor sick folks, the school, and the

old women at the almshouses, reading and working, though I dare say all these things are often as tiresome to her as my spinning and knitting are to me. I will not be so silly any more!" was the conclusion of her meditation. "God has been very good to me in giving me such kind friends as my lady and Mrs. Alwright, and such a home as this at the farm, and I will not be ungrateful. I will make the most of my lessons as long as I am allowed to have them. I will do my very best with my spinning, and see if I cannot draw as fine and even a thread as my mother. I found out long ago that the way to make work interesting was to do one's very best with it. God has always been good to me, and what a comfort it is to think that He can never be anything else than good—that whatever changes come, He will be always the same."

Winifred was likely to have need of all the comfort she could find in such thoughts, for many sad changes were before her. One morning, as she entered Mrs. Alwright's room, she found that discreet spinster surrounded by a wonderful litter of linen and other garments, busily engaged in mending some very precious lace of her lady's.

"News, Winifred!" said Mrs. Alwright.

"Good news or bad?" asked Winifred.

"Both good and bad! Good news of Mr. Arthur, and bad news for you and me, my dear!"

"Mr. Arthur!" asked Winifred, her heart beating so fast as almost to choke her. "Is he safe?"

"Yes, my dear. After many troubles and perils, he escaped in a ship from Biddeford, and got safe and well through France into Holland. He says he wrote a letter, and sent it on shore just as they were about to sail, but we never received it. My lady says you are to come up to her by-and-by, and she will tell you all about the matter herself."

"That is good news, indeed!" said Winifred; "but I wonder why my lady never received his first letter?"

"No doubt it was intrusted to some careless person who lost it," replied Mrs. Alwright. "There is no end to the evils brought about by carelessness, as you will do well to remember."

"And what is the bad news, Mrs. Alwright? I hope nothing has happened to Sir Edward."

"Why, yes, something has happened, though not anything which can be called a misfortune, exactly. His majesty has been pleased to give Sir Edward some office about the court; and we—that is my lady and I, and the butler and the coachman, and Betty Cook—are all going up to London to live.'

Winifred's heart sank fathoms deep. My lady and Mrs. Alwright going away from the Hall! No more lessons in embroidery, no more reading out of the "Chronicle" and the "Arcadia," no more pleasant hours spent in gathering sweet herbs and flowers in the garden, or helping in the still-room and store-room! No more hours spent with my lady in reading and talking about the Bible and the history books—and above all, no further chance of hearing from Arthur Carew! Winifred felt as though all the sunshine of her life had gone out in a moment. She remembered how dissatisfied she had been the past winter—how weary of everything, even of her precious lessons, and she felt as though God had punished her for her discontent by taking away the blessing for which she had been ungrateful. She bit her lip, and busied herself with the fastening of her basket, but all was of no use. The tears would come, and with a sudden impulse, she dropped upon her knees by the side of her good old friend, and laying her head in her lap, she sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Aye, poor dear! I knew just how you would take it!" said Mrs. Alwright, wiping her own eyes and smoothing Winifred's hair, entirely regardless for once of the detriment to her own clean starched

lawn apron. "Such a quiet and pleasant time as we have had this winter since Sir Edward went away! So much as you have improved, and just as you have learned to do cut-work and satin stitch so nicely, and all the darning stitches as well as I could myself. I meant to begin with you in carpet-work and tapestry the very next week, and give you the wool and silk to work a cushion for a birthday present. I got them from Bristol only last night. But you shall have them just the same, and I will give you a lesson every day that we stay at the Hall. It shall go hard but I will find the time somehow or other. I will give you my small frame, too, and you are so clever, I make no doubt you will be able to go on by yourself. So cheer up, my dear, for no doubt it will be all for the best in the end, and don't let us waste our precious time in crying, for that would be very foolish, now that we have so little left."

Winifred felt the truth of this last remark. She dried her eyes, and prepared to make the most of the few pleasant hours she was likely to enjoy. Mrs. Alwright brought out her frame and prepared her canvas, and Winifred for a time almost forgot her troubles in the excitement of seeing

pretty pink rose-bud growing up, as it were, under her fingers.

"Does my lady like going to London?" she asked, as she presently stopped to thread her needle.

"Why, my dear, it is not always easy to say what my lady likes. You know great folks are not forward in expressing their feelings, and my lady never talks of herself. Of course, if Sir Edward is to live in London, my lady would wish to be with him, like a dutiful wife as she is; and so much the better for him, since, between ourselves, my dear, though I would not say so to every one, she has more sense in her glove than ever dwelt under his hat. I dare say my lady may be pleased at the thought of seeing some of her old friends again; but, upon the whole, I am of opinion that she would rather stay here than go to town. She never was fond of company, even as a girl. She would often beg to be left at home when the rest went out, and after she became a widow, I do believe that with her own good will she would never have left her own room, save to go to church or visit some poor body.

"Sir Edward went to London after his marriage, and was much about the king for some years. So

my lady had to go to court with the other great ladies, but never was a bird more glad to escape from the cage than she was when we came down to the Hall. She recovered her spirits wonderfully, so that Sir Edward himself noticed the change, and he was greatly pleased to see her take such an interest in the gardens and in the schools and almshouses which his grandmother set up. It seemed as though she grew ten years younger. No, I cannot think my lady would ever go to London of her own accord."

"And you, Mrs. Alwright, how do you like it?"

"My dear, I hate and detest London and everything belonging to it!" said Mrs. Alwright, with so much energy that Winifred started and broke her thread. "Nasty, dirty place that it is, always knee-deep in dirt, in mud or dust, everything covered with soot and black, so that one can never be sure of a decent cap and kerchief for two minutes together, and no getting them washed as they should be, either! All sorts of wickedness and folly going on, night and day. Never sure when one hires a new maid that she is not a what-shall-call-um, who will rob the house and run away the first chance you give her, and pretty certain that she will be a lazy, dirty baggage, not worth her

salt! The streets full of all sorts of disorder so that no one is safe after dark. My lady was once stopped in her coach, coming home from Whitehall, and would have been robbed and murdered too, for aught I know, only for a party of soldiers who came up just in time. Poor starving creatures begging at the corners of the streets—why, if you will believe me, my dear, a poor sailor actually crept into our back-yard for shelter one cold night, and was found dying in the morning. My lady and I tried all we could to revive him, but he was too far gone. He said he had ate nothing for a week, and I could easily believe it by his looks. Brazen, painted baggages riding in their coaches in the park and jostling honest women!"

Mrs. Alwright stopped for sheer want of breath.

"But I suppose there must be some good people in so large a place as London?" said Winifred, doubtfully.

"Yes, to be sure, child, a plenty of them. Even in the court itself, bad as it was. There was Mrs. Godolphin, a saint if ever there was one, and Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, better people could not be; and as for Mrs. Macy, their daughter, she was too good to live. O yes, no doubt there are good people everywhere, but yet there is a terrible deal of

wickedness in great cities, such as we know nothing about here; for my part, I could wish there was no such place. I did hope to spend the rest of my days among the green fields, and to live and die in the country; but God's will be done! No doubt He knows best!"

"It is hard to think so always," said Winifred.

"Well, sweetheart, it is a comfort that He *does* know best, and will go on in His own way, whatever we poor mortals may think of His doings. But now you must go up to my lady, and while you are gone, I will put a few stitches just to help you along and give you something to look at for a guide."

Winifred found Lady Peckham in her dressing-room, which was all in a litter with mails and boxes. Lady Peckham was seated at her cabinet, looking over and destroying letters and papers. As Winifred looked around the usually pleasant and orderly apartment, as she remembered the delightful hours he had spent there, and thought how soon it would be shut up and deserted, the tears swelled to her eyes again, and she wished, with Mrs. Alwright, that there were no such place as London in the whole world!

"Well, Winifred, I suppose you have heard all

the news from Mrs. Alwright?" said Lady Peckham, kindly.

"Yes, my lady."

"I have a message for you from my brother," said Lady Peckham, taking a letter from her pocket. "He says, 'Tell my little Winifred that I think of her, and I hope she remembers me, at least in her prayers.'"

Winifred felt that there was little danger of her forgetting, but she knew that she should break down utterly if she tried to speak, so she courtesied, and remained silent.

"Come hither to me, Winifred," said Lady Peckham.

Winifred obeyed, not by any means sure that she had not incurred a reproof in presuming to shed tears before such a great lady. She was mistaken.

"My poor child! My dear, faithful little friend!" said Lady Peckham, and presently, to her astonishment, Winifred found herself drawn into my lady's arms, and crying on her shoulder as freely as if it had been her own mother.

"You are very dear to me, Winifred," said my lady, presently, in a low voice. "I have always been fond of you, both for your own sake and that

of a dear friend whom you much resemble. I have envied your mother the possession of such a daughter, but the events of the last few weeks have made me feel toward you more like an elder sister."

What made the hot blood rush into Winifred's cheeks at these words, so that she was glad to have her face hidden from her friend? Perhaps she could not have told if she had been asked.

"I would gladly take you with me to London, if it were possible," continued Lady Peckham. "I would gladly adopt you as my own, but I should have no right to deprive your parents of such a treasure. God has appointed to each of us His children our place, where we have His special work to do, and if in our impatience or self-indulgence we strive to better His appointment, He will soon show us our mistake. But, Winifred, if anything should happen to make you need a home, you must let me know."

"Will you never come back to the Hall, my lady?"

"I cannot tell, my child. Not for a long time, I fear. Sir Edward has received an appointment, as you have doubtless heard from Alwright, and so long as he is attached to the court we must remain in London. I confess it is not a pleasant

prospect to me, but I try to submit and to believe that it will be for the best."

"It is hard to think that God orders everything for the best," Winifred ventured to observe; "but, my lady, I think it would be still harder to live if one did not believe it. It seems the only comfort one has in times like these."

"True, sweetheart! I trust you may never find your faith more severely tried than now. But this is a world of great and sad changes, and you may live to look back upon the present as a very small trial."

Winifred could not imagine any state of things in which the present trial should seem small to her. She was soon to find out her mistake.

"And now, Winifred, I wish you to ask a favor for me of your good mother," continued Lady Peckham. "I wish you would ask her to allow you to remain at the Hall until we go to London. You can help Mrs. Alwright a great deal, and I shall be glad of your society."

Winifred looked up in surprise. The news seemed too good to be true. Should she really remain a whole week at the Hall—perhaps longer—and see my lady every day?

"Oh, my lady, you are too good!" she said, gratefully.

Lady Peckham smiled rather sadly. "I am good to myself, then, my dear. I am not at all sure that I am conferring any favor upon you. But you may tell your mother that I shall be careful not to spoil her little maiden."

Dame Magdalen looked rather doubtfully at her husband when Winifred preferred Lady Peckham's request, after her return home.

"I should be loth to refuse my lady anything, sweetheart, so kind as she has been to you! But to let you stay so long at the Hall—I am doubtful."

"My lady said she would be sure not to spoil me, mother," said Winifred.

"She will not *mean* to spoil you, I know very well. My lady means nothing but what is kind and good; but, my maid, how will it be when you return home again? Will not the plain, homely ways and life at the farm, and the every-day work and duties of your station, become wearisome to you? My lady has been very kind in noticing and making in some sort a companion of you; but you must never forget that you are a plain yeoman's daughter."

"I will try not to be discontented, mother," said Winifred, meekly. "I know what my place is, and I am thankful that I have so good and pleasant a home as this; but, mother"—and Winifred's voice faltered—"perhaps I shall never see my dear lady again!"

"Let her go, dame, I pray you!" said Gilbert Evans, stroking his daughter's head. "We all owe much to my lady for her care of the child, and she will learn nothing but good at the Hall, though there are few great families of which I would say as much. I do not wonder the poor lady feels the need of companionship. Go now, and bring me my pipe and box. The child must go out into the world some day!" he added, as Winifred left the room. "We cannot always keep her to ourselves, and she is learning what will help her to earn her bread if ever she should be thrown on herself."

"Winifred has learned a great deal," said Magdalen. "Her white seam and cut-work are wonderful, and she can do the twill and diaper darning stitches better than I could in my best days; but yet I sometimes fear for the effect of all these lessons. Whom is the girl to marry?"

"Perhaps she may have the luck to catch a sailor

lad, as her mother did before her," said Gilbert, laughing, and patting his wife's still fair cheek. "Dost remember how thy fine relations turned up their noses at poor Gilbert Evans, when he came a-courting Magdalen Coffin, whom he fished out of the Catwater when the pleasure-boat was overset?" 'What does that sailor fellow want with Madge?' said thy cousin. 'Give him a crown and a draught of strong water, and send him on his way!'"

"Ah, Gilbert, it is not every orphan and dependent maid who has the luck of poor Madge Coffin!" said Magdalen, smiling. "Winifred's lot is likely to be the opposite of mine. My proud cousin brought me up to be a household drudge—a serving-maid in all but the name. But even let the child do as she will! She is a good girl, and has worked hard this winter."

So it was settled, and Winifred went up to the Hall to stay for the two weeks that should elapse before Lady Peckham went to London. Busy weeks they were, and full of pleasant employment, whether she worked at her embroidery, ran up and down stairs for Mrs. Alwright and helped her in the still-room and kitchen, where she learned to make biscuits, and almond paste, and maukpane

and saffron cakes, and all the other delicacies for which that lady was famous, or whether she sat or walked with my lady in the rapidly lengthening twilight, talking of the things they both loved, or read to her as she worked in her own chamber. Many were the cabinet drawers and boxes she helped to rummage, filled with all the accumulations of generations of ladies famous for needlework and all such accomplishments, and many were the precious presents she received,—bits of wonderful brocades and ribbons for her silk patchwork (then a great fashion, as it was a few years since), of ivory and tortoise-shell tatting-shuttles and netting-boxes, of pin-cushions and needle-books, of embroidery patterns and silks, each and all accompanied by the exhortation, "Take care of it, child! It will come in use some day."

But at last all came to an end. The day of final departure arrived. Winifred bade her friends farewell, and stood at the hall door till the clumsy coach with its six horses and outriders (not for show, but use,) drove down the long avenue and disappeared. Then, feeling as though a part of her life had gone away with it, she dried her eyes, and turned back into the house to finish up some last things which had been left to her care.

Later in the day, Winifred walked homeward, followed by the herd-boy bearing her bundles, but carrying herself, as too precious to intrust to another, her chief treasures—Hall's "Chronicle," some books of devotion my lady had given her, and the "Arcadia" of Sir Philip Sidney; "the only romance," said Mrs. Alwright, "fit for a young maiden to read." At the turn of the avenue, she stopped and looked back. There stood the old Hall, in all its quaint beauty, under the light of the spring sunshine, but all the windows were closed, and Winifred thought it already looked desolate and forlorn. She gazed a long time, till her eyes grew too full to see any longer.

"Well," said she, as at last she turned away, "I have at least one comfort! No one can ever take from me the remembrance of the pleasant times I have had and the things I have learned of my lady!"

CHAPTER XII.

BRISTOL.

"HERE is that child, poring over her book again, wasting her precious time and eyesight! I declare she is enough to try a saint! After all I have done for her! I have a great mind to burn up all her books except the Bible, that I have."

Winifred looked up wearily as these words were spoken. She had grown tall and pale since we last saw her in the avenue at Holford Hall, and the expression of her face wears more of sadness, but there are the same clear-cut features, the same large, steadfast gray eyes and marked eyebrows which first attracted Lady Peckham's attention to the child in the Blue-school at Holford. But the window where she now sits and strains her sight to catch the last daylight looks not into the farm closes, but into such a narrow lane that the

opposite neighbors could almost shake hands across it. For Master Simon Evans lives near the water-side for the convenience of his business; and even the dog-carts used in the wider streets of Bristol cannot pass each other in Fish Lane.

Winifred looked up wearily as the shrill voice of reproach sounded over her head. The speaker was a sharp, energetic-looking woman, who seemed to have worked off every inch of superfluous flesh and to have nothing left but bone and muscle.

"I have finished all the sewing you laid out, aunt, and I have carried home Mrs. Bowler's kerchiefs, and put the money in your box. The children are in bed and asleep, and I thought I might read a little while."

"And how much did Mrs. Bowler pay you, child? She ought to give you a good price."

"Forty shillings for the kerchiefs, aunt, and ten for the apron."

"Well, well! It is a fair price, but they are well worth every farthing of it!" said Dame Evans, slightly mollified. "I will say for you that there is not a person in Bristol who can do cut-work and satin-stitch equal to yourself. But you might have taken your knitting, child, if you had nothing else to do. Reading is nothing but a waste of time

for folks like us, except upon Sundays and holidays, when we can do nothing else."

"And, aunt, I saw Lady Corbet at Mrs. Bowler's, and she wishes me to come to her house every day to teach her daughters and oversee their work. I am to take my meals with the young ladies and walk out with them, and she will give me ten shillings a week. I am to begin to-morrow if you are willing."

"Laws me!" exclaimed Dame Evans, quite dazzled at the prospect of such an honor. "What a fine thing for you! Why, they are the richest people in Bristol. Sir John entertained his late blessed majesty when he visited the city, and was knighted on that occasion. I have heard my Lady Corbet was cousin to old Lord Carew."

Winifred's heart gave a bound at this news. Might she not, through Lady Corbet, obtain some news of Lady Peckham and Arthur? It was nearly three years since she had heard anything of Arthur, but she had never once forgotten to pray for him, night and morning.

"You are willing to have me go then, aunt?"

"What does the child mean? Willing indeed! You ought to be thankful on your knees for such an honor, and you talk about being willing, as

though you had asked leave to go to the fair! I am only afraid you will not know how to behave properly with such grand ladies, having lived in the country all your life. Yes, of course I am willing, only be careful of your manners, and be sure you say 'my lady' every time you speak to her."

Winifred smiled rather sadly. She had not many fears upon the score of manners. She had been used to intercourse with a much greater lady than Lady Corbet, the wife of a Bristol sugar-refiner; but she was glad of the employment, as well as of the prospect of some change in her monotonous and dreary life. She had entertained serious thoughts of setting up a little school of her own, and here was the work ready provided for her.

The last two years had brought many sad reverses to Winifred Evans. The removal of Lady Peckham to London had been the first of a series of changes which had ended by bringing her into the little brick-paved kitchen in Fish Lane where we now find her. But a few months after Gilbert Evans sailed, taking with him his son, came news of the total loss of the ship and crew. Master Evans, who had been for some time in declining

health, had a paralytic stroke upon hearing the news, and lingered on a helpless and apparently senseless invalid till the next year. Then came one of the devastating epidemics of that period, sweeping over Bridgewater and all the towns in the neighborhood. The feeble old man and Dame Magdalen, worn out with care and sorrow, were among the first victims, and Winifred was left with nobody to depend upon but her uncle and aunt in Bristol, whom she had seldom seen, and Lady Peckham, who was far away in London—and London, so far as communication was concerned, was as far from Bristol in that day as it is now from New Zealand. She wrote at once to my lady, sending the letter by one of the grooms at the Hall who was going up to town, and waited anxiously for an answer, but none came ; and at last the news arrived at the Hall that Sir Edward had gone abroad, taking his family with him ! Here was a death-blow to all Winifred's hopes ! She had nothing left to do but to return to Bristol with her uncle and aunt and share their home, at least till some prospect appeared of independent occupation.

Dame Evans was on the whole a well-meaning woman, but like some other well-meaning persons, very intolerable to live with. Housekeeping was

her idol. She cared for nothing in the world but scouring and cleaning, cooking and washing, spinning, sewing, and knitting. In her mind a house was not a place to live and be happy in, but something whose use was to be kept clean ; to have the bricks scoured, the woodwork waxed and rubbed and polished endlessly, the windows brightened, and the flies driven out. Comfort and shelter were secondary objects. Clothes were made to be mended and kept clean ; and as to books, they had, according to Dame Margery, "no use in the 'varsal world but to waste people's precious time and keep them from their duties." Dame Margery was a steady keeper at home on week-days, and a regular church-goer on Sundays ; she never went to revels or merry-makings, or allowed her family to do so, and she would have been both surprised and indignant if any one had told her that she was as much wedded to the things of this world as her neighbor the goldsmith's wife, whose gay gowns and frequent parties were the talk of the whole street ; and that it was as frivolous and belittling to set her heart upon pewter tankards and fine linen as upon flounces and lace. It did not occur to her to think that drawers and cupboards, kitchen floors and parlor windows, trenchers and

napkins, were as much earthly and transitory in their nature as fairs and revels. Simon Evans was a master-workman and well to do in the world; but Dame Margery saved every penny and every candle-end as carefully as she had done when he was living upon the wages of a journeyman. She allowed her family no better food, and had no more to give away. If people were poor, it was their own fault. *She* was not poor—why could not they do as she had done? The question, "Who maketh thee to differ?" was one which did not occur to her.

It may be guessed that Winifred and her aunt did not suit each other very well. Dame Evans declared that the girl had been utterly spoiled by poor sister Magdalen, who was nothing better than a dreamer herself, for all her gentle blood, and congratulated the child on at last getting into hands that would give her some training and teach her something useful. The training consisted in toiling from morning till night to clean what had just been washed and to wash what was already clean; in making garments which when done were too good to be worn, and in being reminded every day and all day long of her own deficiencies, and

of the goodness of her uncle and aunt in taking upon themselves such a burden.

Winifred could not bring herself to feel that she was a burden. She was well aware that she did as much work as had ever been expected of Priscilla at the farm, and since she had found fine needle-work and embroidery to do, she had earned more than enough money for her own support. Moreover she had taught the two girls to read and write since she came to Bristol, rather, it must be confessed, against the will of their mother, who complained that Winnie would make Betsey and Sally as idle and dreaming as herself. But here, for once, Simon Evans exerted his authority, and when he did, even Dame Margery had no choice but to submit.

These were dreary days to Winifred. The change was great from the open, breezy field and heath, and the stately avenues and lovely gardens of the Hall, to the narrow alley where she now lived. There was not a green thing to be seen except from one window in the attic, where she could catch a glimpse of some distant tree-tops; and at these tree-tops Winifred could gladly have gazed for hours if she would have been allowed. But it was hard for her to find time even to think,

since Dame Margery's voice kept up an incessant patter of small complaints and fault-findings, small remarks and smaller gossip, for, although she seldom went out, she contrived to pick up all the news of the town. Her very voice grated on Winifred's ears. She never spoke in a pleasant or cheerful tone, and a stranger hearing her in another room would be sure to think she was either whining or scolding; while at the least annoyance she took on a tone and expression of suffering martyrdom. Reading was out of the question, save by fits and snatches, or on Sundays, when she was not engaged in cooking the Sunday dinner, or keeping the little ones quiet, while their mother nodded over her Bible, under the idea that she was performing a pious duty.

It was a great relief when Winifred found fine sewing and embroidery enough to occupy her hands for some hours of every day. The close attention which this work required was a sufficient excuse for not talking, and she was learning by degrees to listen to her aunt's voice as one listens to the working of machinery or the patter of the rain — as a disagreeable noise which cannot be helped. As she worked at the muslin apron or the lace whisk which occupied her hands and eyes,

her thoughts were comparatively free, and they wandered backward over the past—her pleasant life at the farm, the hours spent at the Hall or with good Dame Sprat, now enjoying that Heavenly Inheritance to which she had so steadily looked forward during her long and troubled life. She called to mind her last precious conversations with Lady Peckham, and the dying words of her mother: "Winifred, lay hold on eternal life. Whatever may be your lot here, never give up your title to your Heavenly Inheritance. Remember always how He hath said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee:' and there is no change in His goodness. I leave you in His hands who never yet failed them that sought Him."

This was Winifred's only stay, her one source of courage and comfort. Severe as was the change, heavy as were her bereavements, weary and dull as was her daily toil, fretting as were her daily trials, it was her Heavenly Father who sent or who allowed it all, and therefore all *must* be for her good in the end, though it might be a long time first. She was sure that there was waiting for her a lovely, peaceful home, filled with all those beautiful things which she loved, and many, many others, far beyond anything she had seen or could

conceive—a home where all her dear ones were waiting for her or would come at last, and where there would be no more parting forever. This inheritance was *hers*—prepared for her by her Heavenly Father, sealed and made sure by her Saviour's death and resurrection. It was to be hers at last, however long she might have to wait, and it might be hers any day. She might go to bed any night in her little close bedroom, and awake amid the unspeakable splendors of heaven.

Such thoughts gave Winifred courage to live from day to day, making no plans, never looking forward, but leaving all in better hands than her own. They were no longer beautiful dreams, as in the days when she walked over the heath or up to the Hall. They alone were the living realities, and all the rest was but a dream—a weary, troublesome dream, which would pass away in the morning. She was careful to give no just cause of offence, and when she was blamed unjustly, she tried to accept it in the spirit of meekness, "knowing that the trial of our faith worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed."

It was with a thankful heart that Winifred dressed herself next day for her first lesson at Lady

Corbet's. She thought it likely that she might meet with some disagreeable things. Lady Corbet evidently had a great idea of her own consequence, and seemed to think she was conferring a favor on Winifred by allowing her to teach her daughters. It was very likely also that the young ladies might be proud and consequential. But at all events it was a change. Sir John Corbet lived in the best part of the city, on one of the hills upon which Bristol is built. He had a fine house and also a garden, and the very thought of seeing green and growing plants was pleasant to one who had been shut away from them so long.

"How pretty Cousin Winnie looks!" said Betsey, gazing after her cousin as she tripped down the lane with something of her old elastic step.

"Beauty is nothing, child!" said her mother, though she herself was thinking at that moment that Winifred was a very creditable young person to have passing in and out of the house. "Good looks are only skin deep! Handsome is that handsome does!"

"Then I think Winifred is the handsomest person I know!" returned sturdy little Betsey; "for I am sure she is the very best."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CITY KNIGHT'S FAMILY.

BRISTOL, at the time of our story, was the second city in England, and was famous for its wealth and luxury, for its West India trade and its sugar refineries, and, alas! also for the infamous slave-trade of which it was the centre, and which dealt in white skins as well as black ones, which not only brought in negroes, but carried out white boys and girls, stolen in the streets sometimes, never to be heard of again. It contained some splendid churches and several ancient endowed schools and hospitals; but the streets were so narrow that no carts were used save those drawn with dogs, and there was hardly a coach in the whole city, for the simple reason that there was no place in which to use one.

Winifred found Lady Corbet in her own private

sitting-room, and was reminded at once of Mrs. Alwright, not only by the basket of linen piled up to be darned and the huge bunch of keys in its little basket on the table, but even by something in the lady's manner of handling her needle and scissors.

"Ah! so you have come betimes, Mrs. Evans!" was her greeting. "I am truly glad to see you! My girls are losing their time and running wild for want of something to do. I have no time to teach them myself, and my last governess has just married Sir John's managing clerk—and a good match for her too, poor thing, for she was an orphan, and Mr. Thomas Green is a good, kind, and steady man, though perhaps a thought elderly. And what can you teach, child—anything besides tapestry and cut-work? I suppose, for instance, you don't know anything about figures?"

"Yes, madam," replied Winifred—she could not bring herself to say my lady—"I know how to cast accounts, and how to keep a household book."

"Dear me, how glad I am!" exclaimed Lady Corbet, relaxing a little from the stateliness with which she had met Winifred, and which did not seem in the least natural to her. "Then I am sure you will help me now and then, won't you?

Sir John he insists that I shall keep an account of all the expenses of the house ; but what is the use, when I never can make my sums come out twice alike ?"

Winifred professed her willingness to render any assistance which might be needed.

"Well, that is kind of you. You see, in such a great household as this—for Sir John he will have all his clerks and 'prentices live in the family—there is a great deal going out all the time, and unless some one looks after things, presently everything is at sixes and sevens. Now I cannot make up my mind to do like my cousin Norton the alderman's wife—she just spends and spends, and seems to know no more what it costs to live than my Betty. I cannot think that is right, somehow. It seems as if one ought to give an account of one's stewardship, don't you think so, sweetheart ?" asked Lady Corbet, who seemed quite delighted at having some one to whom she could talk freely.

"I do, indeed, madam !" replied Winifred, feeling her heart warm toward the bustling lady, whom she had at first thought she never could like. "I shall be glad to give you help about accounts or any other matter. Mrs. Alwright taught me a good deal about housekeeping when I used to go to the Hall."

"Mrs. Alwright!" exclaimed Lady Corbet. "Dear me, child, you don't surely mean Hannah Alwright—she that was brought up by my old Lady Carew, and afterward went to live with her daughter, Lady Peckham at Holford Hall?"

"The same, madam," replied Winifred, her heart beating fast. "My lady was the kindest friend I ever had; and I used to go to Mrs. Alwright two or three times a week to learn fine work and other things, and I stayed at the Hall for two weeks before my lady went away to London."

"Laws me! Do you know, my dear"—Lady Corbet's dignity had dissolved into thin air by this time—"I thought of Cousin Margaret the moment I saw you at Mistress Bowler's the other day! Not that you look like her, either, but you have something in your manner—and do you know anything of my cousin, Mrs. Evans?"

"Indeed I do not, madam," said Winifred, sadly. "I hoped I might hear news of her from you."

"And I wish I had it for you, with all my heart!" returned Lady Corbet. "But it is long since I have had anything to do with the family. You see I am related to the Carews by my mother's side, and my old lady, she would have me to live with her after my parents died It was good in her, no

doubt, but we did not get on well. My lady must needs have everything in her own way, and she set out to break off my match with John Corbet, though I had been betrothed to him in my parents' life time, and with their consent—and to marry me to Mr. Hervey, a cousin of her own, and a much grander match, to be sure, as things were then, than my poor John Corbet. But though I approve of young folks being guided by their elders in all such matters, I would not give up my poor John for any Mr. Hervey, so there was a breach directly. My cousin Margaret took my part, though she dared not say a great deal, for every one in the house stood in awe of my lady. However, married I was, and my lady would never see me afterward. And how was my cousin, Mrs. Evans? Did not poor Arthur's death break her down very much? Why, my dear, how white you are! Is the room too warm for you?"

"I walked fast," said Winifred, recovering herself by a violent effort, though she felt stunned and giddy.

"Yes, I dare say, and you are not used to the crowded streets. Here, take my smelling-bottle. Yes, poor Arthur died five or six years ago, soon after he went abroad, and a pity it was, for he was

a likely youth, and they say the present lord will never do any good. Well, my dear, your color has come back, sure enough; so if you are ready we will go see my girls. Just let me lay out the clean towels and napkins for the maids."

Winifred had time to recover the calmness which had been so sorely shaken, while Lady Corbet bustled about, arranging the linen. She understood at once that the first report of Arthur's death was the one to which Lady Corbet referred. She was conscious of a mingled feeling of relief and intense disappointment. She could not feel that no news was good news, but at least it was not bad news. She was quite her usual self when Lady Corbet announced that she was ready to go upstairs. The school-room was in the upper floor of a wing built out into the garden, and as they opened the green baize door which separated it from the rest of the house, their ears were met by the sound of passionate crying.

"Ah, my poor Betty!" said Lady Corbet. "I do hope, my dear Mrs. Evans, you will be able to prevent that child's sisters from teasing her life out. They dare not do so before me or their father, but so sure as she is left alone with them there is *such* a time! Heyday! what does this

mean?" she exclaimed, as she opened the door. "Betty, what are you doing there!"

The scene partly explained itself. A pale little girl of nine years or thereabout was perched very insecurely, as it seemed, on the top of a high cabinet or chest of drawers. She had evidently climbed to her elevation by means of a stool placed upon a table, but the table had been pushed away, and she had no means of descending; while her two sisters, twins of fourteen, stood laughing at her discomfiture. A third girl, some two or three years older, sat reading in a window, with rather an elaborate appearance of taking no notice of the others.

"What does this mean?" asked Lady Corbet again, helping the child down from her dangerous position. "What have you been about?"

"Jem threw my doll up there on the cabinet,' sobbed Betty, "and when I climbed up to get it they took away the table! And they said," continued Betty, clinging to her mother, and pointing to a cupboard high up in the wall, "they said there was a skeleton in there!

"Nonsense!" returned Lady Corbet, sharply. "There is nothing whatever in the cupboard. Are you not ashamed, girls, to treat your poor sister

so? Here is Mrs. Evans, your new governess, wondering at your bad manners!"

To do them justice, the girls did look heartily ashamed.

"I must say, Paulina, I think you might use your influence to prevent such tricks," said her mother, severely, turning to the young lady in the window, who had not moved. "At least," she added, sharply, "you might rise to your feet when your mother and your governess enter the room!"

Paulina rose with the air of a martyr.

"I beg your pardon, madam!" said she, in a mournful voice. "I am so used to noise and confusion that a little more or less does not attract my attention."

"She is just as bad as the rest, only she is slyer about it!" cried the little girl. "I hate them all, that I do, and I wish I was dead—so!"

Paulina darted a glance at her sister which was anything but amiable, and then casting her eyes on the floor, she stood in silence.

"Hush! hush! let me hear not one word more, or nobody will have anything but bread and water till supper time!" said Lady Corbet, decidedly. "This is your new governess, Mrs. Winifred Evans, who has been brought up by my cousin the Lady

Peckham, and is doubtless well qualified to teach you all you should know. She will remain with you from eight in the morning till six at night—were not those the hours we agreed upon, Mrs. Evans?—and you will obey her as you would your father and mother. Let me hear no complaints of any of you, from oldest to youngest—do you hear?"

The young ladies courtesied demurely. Paulina lifted her heavy eyelids, and looked first at the newcomer and then at her mother.

"Do I understand you, madam, to include me in the list of Mrs. Evans' pupils?" she asked.

"Of course!" said her mother, sharply, again "You have many things yet to learn, mistress, though you think yourself so wise. Let me hear that you show yourself both obedient and apt to learn."

Paulina courtesied again, with an intensification of the martyr expression.

"You will teach them whatever you think best, Mrs. Evans. I have perfect confidence in you," said Lady Corbet, turning to Winifred. "But I hope you will be particular as to their behavior, both toward each other and toward yourself, and also as to their needlework, which is, in my opinion,

one of the most necessary things for a lady to understand. Now, let me hear a good account of you, my mistresses, or it will be the worse for you all!"

There were a few minutes of silence after Lady Corbet left the room. Paulina had returned to her book, turning her back ostentatiously on the company. The younger girls stood as if uncertain what to do next, and were evidently much disposed to giggle. Winifred saw that her task might be a somewhat difficult one, and she determined to take it in hand at once.

"What work are you doing, young ladies?" she asked, in the calm, clear tones which always command attention. "Let me see your frames.'

Jemima brought her own and her sisters' frames from a closet, but Paulina made no movement.

"I will attend to your elder sister first," said Winifred. "Mrs. Paulina, let me see your work."

There was a slight but decided emphasis in the tone, which made Paulina think it best to obey. She threw down her book, unwillingly enough, and brought her tapestry work to the table. It was less perfect than either of her sisters, and was indeed in utter confusion.

"I can do nothing with it!" said she, pettishly.

"I hate the sight of it! Where is the use of wasting so much precious time upon needlework, which is, after all, of no use to any one?"

"Pall only says so because she cannot work as well as Phyllis!" said Betty, pertly.

"You should not speak so of your elder sister," said Winifred, gravely. "You have made a mistake in the very beginning of your pattern, Mrs. Paulina, and that has put you wrong all through. You cannot go on well when you begin wrong, whether in tapestry work or anything else."

Paulina seemed interested in the remark, and her brow cleared up a little.

"I understand that," said she, "but what is the use of beginning at all? How much better to discipline one's mind and heart by good works and acts of devotion!"

"And what better discipline or work could you find than that of obedience to your parents?" asked Winifred. "That is the discipline God himself has prepared for you, and surely it is more likely to be beneficial than any you can contrive or arrange for yourself. This must all come out, Paulina, or else you must take a new piece. I should advise you to begin anew from the begin-

ning, for I fear you will never make anything of this."

"I would rather try taking this out," said Paulina, the martyr expression returning, as she sat down with her frame in her old place by the window. "I don't wish to choose the easiest way, for my part!"

Winifred could not forbear smiling. Paulina saw the smile, and colored.

"Yes, I expect to be laughed at," said she, in a tone which was certainly not that of a martyr. "I have always been ridiculed and persecuted ever since I began to try to lead a devout life, and I always expect to be, but I mean to persevere, for all that."

Winifred turned to the work of the other girls, praised what they had done well, corrected their mistakes, and finally, having set them all down to work, proposed that she should read or relate to them a tale while they were at their frames. The proposition was received with great favor by the younger ones, especially by Betty, who declared that she loved nothing so much as a tale.

"And let it be all about giants, and fairies, and enchanted castles," pleaded Jemima.

"I will tell you plenty of such tales in our play-

hours," said Winifred, "but not in school-time. Let me see if I cannot make a true story as interesting to you as a fairy tale."

She then began the touching story of Richard Grenville's death, as she had read it in Hackluyt's 'Voyages," and was glad to see that her auditors were capable of being interested, and that even Paulina, who had begun by turning her back upon the company, became so engaged with the story as to forget her self-imposed task of picking out. As the clock struck eleven, there was a general cry of "Oh, do go on!"

"Not now," said Winifred. "We must keep to our hours, and you have been sitting still long enough. Does madam your mother allow you to walk in the garden?"

"She will let us, I know, if you go with us," replied Phyllis, one of the twins. "Shall I ask her?"

"If you please."

Phyllis skipped away and presently returned, followed by her mother.

"What is this about walking in the garden?" asked Lady Corbet.

Winifred explained.

"O yes, they may go if you like to go with them

and keep an eye upon them. But perhaps you will not care to do that?"

"Indeed I shall, madam. I have not been in a garden since I used to gather rose-leaves in that at the Hall."

"Ah, but you must not expect to see anything like the Hall gardens here, my dear. My cousin, Sir Edward, was always famous for his taste in gardening and the like, but Sir John has no time for such matters. Only do not let these wild girls meddle with fruit or flowers, for their father will be very angry. You must watch them well."

The garden possessed neither the extent nor the variety of that at Holford Hall, but still it was a garden, and it was with a sensation of exquisite delight that Winifred found herself once more among flowers and shrubs, and the familiar odors of lavender, rosemary, and lilies. Paulina walked silently at her side. She was a tall, pretty girl, and would have been attractive but for the air of self-conscious and almost sullen constraint which pervaded her whole face and manner. She seemed like a person who was trying hard to sustain an assumed character, and, as it seemed, with very indifferent success.

"Tell me about Lady Peckham," said she, at

last, abruptly. "My mother speaks of her as if she were a saint! Was she really so?"

"What do you mean by a saint, Mrs. Paulina?" asked Winifred.

Paulina's ideas did not seem very clear. She thought a saint was one who observed all the hours of prayer, and took the sacraments frequently, and attended on the poor and sick, and gave up the world by retiring into a convent or some such place.

"And is that all?" asked Winifred.

"Of course, a saint would read none but religious books, and wear coarse clothes with haircloth next the skin, and perhaps lie all night in her coffin or upon ashes, and do many penances."

"Mrs. Paulina, do you read your Bible and Prayer-book?" asked Winifred.

"Of course," answered Paulina, indignantly. "I have read the Bible all through twice, and I know the daily prayers and the Litany and Communion Service by heart."

"Well, will you tell me which of the saints of the Bible is described as wearing haircloth next his skin, and sleeping in his coffin upon ashes?"

Paulina could not think of any one.

"Feeding the poor, and constant prayer, and

such like are all well in their way, but they are not enough to make a saint," continued Winifred. "St. Paul says he might give all his goods to feed the poor, and give his body to be burned, yes, and even have faith so that he could remove mountains, and yet all these things might profit him nothing."

"I don't see what will make a saint, then," said Paulina.

"Suppose you read that same chapter I have quoted—the thirteenth of First Corinthians—and see if it will help you."

"But please tell me about Cousin Margaret," said Paulina.

"I will at another time. At present I must see to your sisters. Come, girls, let us have a race from end to end of this green alley, and see if it will not give us an appetite for dinner."

"I cannot run," said Betsey. "It makes my side ache and my heart beat so."

"Well, then, you shall be judge. Come, now—start fair! One, two, three, and away!"

This was a new idea—this having a governess who could play with them. When they were out of breath with exercise, Winifred showed them how to make larkspur rings and whole families of dolls out of foxgloves and the small green berries

which had fallen from the trees. Never had a play-hour passed so pleasantly, so free from quarrelling and fault-finding.

"Well, you do look all as fresh as roses!" said Lady Corbet, approvingly, as, with shining hair, neatly arranged dress, and rosy cheeks, the young ladies presented themselves before her at dinner. "Even Betty has a little color in her pale face. I am sure, Mrs. Evans, you know how to deal with them, and I shall leave them entirely to you."

The afternoon was not quite as pleasant as the morning. There was an examination in tables and arithmetical rules, in which all were utterly deficient—indeed, arithmetic was not a common acquirement in those days. None of the girls except Paulina could read intelligently, and Betty scarcely at all. There was some mortification and not a few tears over the tasks set them, and Betty declared she could not learn to read—there was no use in trying. However, by a mixture of decision and gentleness, the lessons were dragged through at last.

"That was very well, my dear!" said Winifred, as Phyllis finished her recitation of the pence table, after two or three trials. "I see you have

taken pains, and I doubt not the next time you will have it quite perfect."

"How can you say so, Mrs. Evans?" exclaimed Paulina, who had appeared quite absorbed in the book she was reading. "Phyllis made at least three mistakes, and hesitated at all the questions. I do not see how you can call that a good lesson."

Phyllis' smile vanished, and she cast an angry glance at her sister.

"Just like you. Grudging a morsel of praise to any one but yourself," she muttered.

"I call it a good lesson, because Phyllis has taken pains and applied herself," said Winifred. "I think you would be much better employed in doing so than in watching the lessons of others for whom you are in no way responsible. Let me request that I may have no more such interference from any of you."

Paulina returned to her book with her cheeks flushed scarlet, nor did she speak again during th whole afternoon.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BANQUET.

FOR some weeks all went on smoothly between Winifred and her pupils. The needlework was transferred from the morning to the afternoon, and a story or a reading was the reward of good behavior. Phyllis and Jemima, the twins, were easily made amenable to discipline. Phyllis was a lively, high-spirited girl, affectionate and truthful, taking the lead in study and play, and maintaining a complete ascendency over Jemima, who was slower and more disposed to indolence, but who followed her sister's lead in everything, good and bad.

Winifred found the most difficulty in breaking up the habit of teasing both their elder and younger sisters. Paulina's airs of superior sanctity and wisdom, and Betty's passionate temper, offered a

fair mark for their girlish wit. Paulina usually received their assaults in sullen silence and contempt, while a very little sufficed to throw Betty into a passion of rage, in which she was like a mad creature for a few minutes, and afterwards perfectly overwhelmed with penitence and grief. These tempests were the more dangerous as the child's health was very delicate, and she was subject to alarming swoons.

With Paulina, Winifred could not feel that she gained any ground. At first, indeed, Paulina seemed much interested in talking about Lady Peckham and her ways, though she was evidently unwilling to allow any merit to a style of piety so very different from her own; and many were the arguments she held with Winifred upon the subject. All at once, just as Winifred seemed to be getting upon some terms of intimacy and confidence with her, Paulina froze up again more entirely than ever. She would not speak a word more than she could help on religious subjects, or any other, and spent as much time as possible in her own room; while her fastings and penances were renewed with redoubled ardor. She asked and obtained permission to attend morning prayers at the cathedral—a permission her mother granted all the more easily,

because Sir John Trelawny, the bishop, was noted as a very decided Protestant, and was indeed one of the seven bishops who were soon afterwards imprisoned by King James. Lady Corbet only stipulated that her daughter should always be accompanied by Molly, one of the maids, who was a great favorite both with her and Ashwell, the old housekeeper. She had come highly recommended, and was a well-mannered, smooth-spoken personage, professing great devotion to the whole family and especially to Mrs. Paulina. Winifred did not like her, and blamed herself for entertaining a prejudice against such a useful and harmless person; but she could not get rid of the feeling that Molly was somehow playing a double part. As Phyllis said, she always looked as if she were watching everything and everybody.

To judge by Paulina's face and manner, she found little comfort in her church-going. She grew thin and pale every day, and often appeared in the morning with her eyes swollen as if she had cried all night. She professed to read a great deal in her own room, but she always excused herself, if possible, from the Bible reading with which Winifred began the morning lessons, and indeed almost always came in too late for them, while her

preoccupation told visibly upon her lessons, in which Phyllis and even Jemima threatened to outstrip her.

"I shall have to speak to your mother, unless you take more pains with your lessons, Paulina," said Winifred to her, one day, after the children had left the room. "You set your sisters a very bad example. What can they think of the effect of your religion, when they see you growing more careless and neglectful of your duties every day? You bring dishonor on the cause itself."

"I cannot help it," said Paulina. "I have something more important to think about than tapestry work and tables."

"Your matters must be important indeed, if they are more so than the duty imposed upon you by God Himself of obeying and honoring your parents!" said Winifred, gravely. "You are cheating and deceiving them by thus wasting your time and mine."

Paulina flushed scarlet, and then, bursting into tears, she ran out of the room. From that time she was more careful with her lessons, but the cloud of depression grew deeper every day, and Winifred began to be seriously uneasy, and to debate with herself whether she ought not to mention the

matter to the girl's mother. But incidents were soon to occur which would render any such explanation unnecessary, and which put an end forever to all poor Betty's school-room troubles.

"Dear me, Mrs. Evans, I wonder if you can help me upon a pinch?" exclaimed Lady Corbet one day, bursting into the school-room, evidently in a great heat. "Here has Sir John sent up from the sugar-house to say that he has a party of Londoners come to see the furnaces, and desiring me to have a banquet prepared for them and be ready to receive them all in half an hour. And there is the furniture in the great room to be uncovered and dusted, and myself to be dressed—and how it is to be done *I* don't know, for Ashwell has gone home to her mother, who is ill, and the cook has no notion of anything beyond her saucepans. Do tell me what I shall do, there's a dear!"

"If you will allow me, madam, I will arrange the banquet myself, and that will allow you time to dress and to superintend the ordering of the great rooms," said Winifred.

"Oh, my dear! But are you sure you know how? Sir John is very particular."

"I think so," said Winifred, smiling. "I have often assisted Mrs. Alwright. There is abundance

of wall fruit now ripe, and if you will allow me as many flowers as I need, and the help of Mrs. Paulina "——

"Take anything you need!" said Lady Corbet, evidently greatly relieved. You will find a tray and dishes in the great closet, and there is the key of the store-room, where is abundance of preserved fruits, both English and other. But use the Indian comfits as much as you can, for Sir John will be glad to see them."

"Cannot we help too?" asked the twins and Betty, all in a breath.

"Not this time," said Winifred. "You have your lessons to learn, and, having wasted so much time already this morning, I cannot allow you to spend any more. Let me see when I come back that you have redeemed your time, and with madam your mother's permission I will bring you some comfits."

"To be sure, poor wretches!" (Wretch, in those days, was a term of endearment.) "Do just as you like, Mrs. Evans, only do have everything ready in time!"

"No fear, madam. Give yourself no concern, only go and dress, and we will have all things prepared," said Winifred, entering into the spirit of the affair, which recalled to her mind some of

the delightful bustles at the Hall on similar occasions. "Run to the garden, Paulina, and bring me all the red and white roses you can find, with plenty of other flowers, and young lavender and rosemary shoots. Cut short stems, and don't go off in a dream and forget what you are about!"

Paulina departed, and presently returned with her basket and apron full of flowers. She found Winifred, with her gown tucked up and her ruffles turned back, dishing out preserves, arranging comfits and spices in numberless glass and china bowls, and piling up fruit in silver baskets. All these bowls and baskets, being arranged in symmetrical order in the large wooden trays which stood on the table, and decked with quantities of flowers, constituted the banquet which it was the custom to serve up to guests like those Lady Corbet expected. Paulina looked on in wonder and admiration, as Winifred contrived, arranged, and planned, harmonizing forms and colors with the eye of a born artist.

"That is really beautiful!" said she, as Winifred stepped back to contemplate her work. "All I have ever seen before were just heaps of good things piled up any how. And you really take pleasure in the work!" she added, looking at Win-

ifred's delicately flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes. "I don't see how one like you can care for such matters. In an hour all this will be ruined and scattered, and who will be the better for all your toil?"

"Ever so many people!" said Winifred. "I shall be the better for having pleased madam your mother, who has been kind to me. Madam will be pleased because Sir John is, and Sir John will be gratified at having done due honor to his guests. Besides, I love the work. It recalls the happiest days of all my life, when I used to help my dear lady at the Hall."

"I should not think my cousin would have cared for such worldly trifles," said Paulina.

"My dear lady cared for anything which would give pleasure to others," said Winifred. "I have seen her spend hours over Sir Edward's laced bands and ruffles because no one else could do them so much to his mind. Ah, my dear, when you come to look rightly at life, you will find that the least trifles may be sanctified by being directed and done to our dear Divine Master. But we will talk of that another time. I hear your mother coming from her room; please ask her to step this way."

Lady Corbet held up her hands.

"You are a jewel—a perfect jewel, Mrs. Evans! I must have you for my own. That comes from your good bringing up. But I must certainly have you with me all the time. You would be worth all the other women in the house to me."

"I am sure, madam, Ashwell does her best," said Paulina. "She has been a faithful servant for many years, and it would be hard to turn her away for a stranger."

"And pray, Mistress Malapert, who talks of turning her away, or who asked your advice in the matter at all?" said Lady Corbet, turning sharply round. "When I want your counsel, I will ask for it. There, child, I did not mean to be sharp with you, but you do vex me past endurance—always taking it for granted that one means to do the worst thing possible, and taking elders and betters to task on every occasion. When I was at your age, I should have felt the rod for such a speech, aye, or such a look, either. There, go to the school-room and keep your sisters in order, while Mrs. Evans remains here to send in the refreshments. The child does put me past patience with her airs," she added, as Paulina departed, with the look of one going to the stake. "Just think of her taking upon her to lecture her own godmother, my old

Aunt Norton, as good a woman as ever breathed, because the poor old lady took her knitting upon Ash-Wednesday!"

"Yet Mrs. Paulina seems, too, as if she were trying to do right," said Winifred. "I do not understand it."

"Oh! trying to do right. One may try too much, in my opinion. I have no fancy for these over-righteous people. But there is the knocker, and I must go. I trust all to you, my dear. I am sure all will go well."

Fortunately all did go well, until just as the last tray of sweetmeats was sent in, when Phyllis, with a scared, pale face, peeped into the little store-room.

"Please, Mrs. Evans, will you come up to the school-room? We can't do anything with Betty."

"What is the matter, and why should you do anything with Betty?" asked Winifred. "Have you been teasing your little sister again, Phyllis?"

"I am sure we did not mean anything," said Phyllis, looking very much ashamed, "only she is so cross. But Paulina needn't have shook her so. But please, Mrs. Evans, do hurry, before madam hears Betty!"

Winifred looked about her to see that everything

was safe, and then hurried up to the school-room. As she opened the green baize door, she was startled by hearing a shriek from Betty very different from her usual scream of passion—an unmistakable cry of pain. She opened the school-room door. Betty stood in the corner of the room, with both hands pressed to her side, sobbing at every breath, and shrieking at every third respiration. Jemima was trying to pacify her, while Paulina sat in the window, endeavoring very unsuccessfully to appear unconscious of what was going on. In an instant Winifred saw that something serious was the matter.

"Come here to me, Betty!" she said, in her gentle tone of authority. "Mrs. Paulina, open the window at once — throw the casement wide. Phyllis, run and bring a glass of wine and some cool water; you will find them in the store-room. Jemima, come and unloose your sister's stays and gown while I hold her in the fresh air."

"Really, Mrs. Evans," began Paulina; but a louder cry from Betty stopped her words, and the child's head sank back upon her friend's shoulder.

"She is dead!" shrieked the twins.

"No; I think she has only fainted," said Winifred, trying to speak calmly, though she was

herself alarmed at the child's ghastly appearance. "Paulina, did not Lady Corbet say that a doctor from London was to be among the guests?"

But Paulina, pale as death and trembling in every limb, could remember nothing.

"She did, I know," said Phyllis, who possessed more ready wit and presence of mind than all the rest together. "Doctor Mercer was his name."

"Very well. Now I am going to lay Betty upon the window seat, where the fresh air will blow upon her. Do you, Phyllis, bathe her face with the strong waters, and, Jemima, fan her. Be steady and quiet like sensible girls till I come back."

The twins, quieted by the trust imposed upon them, promised to obey, and Winifred was soon at the drawing-room door, asking to speak to Lady Corbet.

"Why, what has happened, child? You are as white as your cap! You have not broken the great standing china bowl, have you?"

"No, madam!" said Winifred, hardly able to suppress a smile even there, to see how the good lady's housekeeping instinct came uppermost; "but Betty has fainted, and I fear she is going to be very ill. Will you please come and bring the doctor with you?"

On ordinary occasions, when annoyed, Lady Corbet was as fussy and flustered as an old hen; but any real emergency always made her quiet and sensible at once.

"Ah, poor child! hath she had another swoon? Pray go back to her, Mrs. Winifred, and I will bring the doctor directly."

Winifred hurried back as desired, and found that Betty had revived, but was still in great pain, unable to draw a long breath or to move. Phyllis was supporting her in an upright position as well as she could, and Jemima was fanning her, while Paulina had thrown herself upon the floor in the farthest corner of the room, and was leaning her head upon a chair.

"O Mrs. Evans, help me! Don't let me die!" gasped the poor child. "Oh! am I dying?"

"I trust not, my dear. Do not be alarmed!" said Winifred, cheerfully. "See, you are better already, and here is your mother with the good doctor from London. Now be a good maid, and do as you are bid, and I trust all will be well."

"What's this? The window open, and the air blowing in the child's face!" exclaimed Lady Corbet, who had all the dread of fresh air natural

to an English woman of the time, or indeed of any time.

"Of course! Where should it blow?" returned the doctor, roughly but not unkindly. "When people are gasping for breath, they need fresh air, though I wonder how my young mistress came by sense enough to give it to her. Hold her more upright still—ah! that will do. Let me have your hand, my little girl. Ah! I see. Have you given her anything?" sharply to Winifred.

"Nothing," said Winifred. "I sent for some wine, but she had fainted before it came."

"Just as well. She must have an anodyne at once. Bring me some syrup, a spoon, and water."

"In the store-room, Phyllis!" said Winifred; "quickly, my dear."

Phyllis was back almost before the words were spoken, and the doctor prepared the anodyne with his own hands. There had always been a great struggle to make Betty take medicine, but her own alarm and distress and the ascendency Winifred had already obtained over her rendered her docile.

"Now, she must be put to bed, and kept absolutely quiet," said the doctor. "This young lady —I have not the honor of knowing her name—

seems to have her wits at her fingers' ends. Let her stay with the child and sit up with her to-night. You, madam, keep the house very quiet. I am to be in town some days, and I will look in upon you again in the morning."

"What causes these attacks, doctor?" asked Lady Corbet, after Betty had left the room.

"Heart disease," answered Doctor Mercer, briefly. "I am sorry to shock you, madam, but it is but right you should know, in order to guard against them, since every paroxysm she has is just so much ground lost. With care she may outgrow them, but she is likely enough to die in any one. You must avoid all cause of excitement with her; never let her be struck or shaken; above all, taken roughly by the left arm. One such shock may be fatal."

Paulina, in her dark corner, buried her face deeper at these words, as she remembered how sharply she had shaken Betty by that very arm, and how thin and fragile it had felt in her grasp The twins heard it also as they clung together in the window, and promised each other in whispers that they would never, no, never tease Betty again, no matter what she did, if God would only spare her this time.

"And what about this fever, doctor, that they say is in the town? Can one do anything to keep it off by fumigations or the like?"

"The best way to keep it off is to use plenty o. air and cleanliness," replied Doctor Mercer, who was so far in advance of his age as to be accounted almost a heretic by his learned brethren. "Use good food in moderation, and see that your work-people and the poor about you have the same, and leave the rest to God."

"But you will come and see my poor Betty again in the morning?" urged the anxious mother.

"To be sure! I said so. By the way, who is this young gentlewoman who seems to understand herself so well? A kinswoman of your own?"

"Nay, I cannot call her a kinswoman exactly, though she is a connection of my cousin Margaret, Lady Peckham of Holford, and was indeed partly brought up by her," answered Lady Corbet, who never failed to sport the Peckhams of Holford on every possible occasion. "Her father was captain of a vessel sailing from this port, and son of a Somersetshire yeoman of good estate, but her mother was daughter to a Devonshire gentleman of very old family. She is daily governess to my daugh-

ters, and I am so much pleased with her that I think of taking her into my house altogether."

"So she is an orphan?" said the doctor. "Well, madam, follow my directions, and I trust all will be well; but above all keep the house quiet. I will not answer for consequences should the child be suddenly awakened."

"Well, maidens, you have heard what the good doctor has said," said Lady Corbet. "Let me see how quiet you can be. I must say you have behaved well and shown yourselves sensible girls. But where is Paulina?"

"Here, madam!" said Paulina, lifting her pale, tear-stained face from the chair on which it had been hidden; and then, throwing herself at her mother's feet, she exclaimed, in a suppressed voice: "It was all my fault, mother—all, all! Beat me if you will or turn me out of the house, for I deserve it all!"

"Hush, hush, child! It is a good thing to own your fault, and I am glad to see it, but don't go into hysterics, and wake your poor sister. Phyllis, you can tell a straight story. Let me hear an account of the whole from you."

There did not seem to be so very much to tell. The twins had been teasing Betty with rough play,

while Paulina was reading as usual in her corner. Finally Betty fell over a foot-stool against Paulina, and knocked her book out of her hand. Betty cried out. "And then," concluded Phyllis, "Paulina shook her hard, and slapped her shoulders two or three times with the book, to make her stop screaming. Then when she would not stop, Paulina set her in the corner, and shook her again. Then I was frightened because Betty looked so bad, and I ran and called Mrs. Evans."

"It is all true!" said Paulina, between her sobs. "I have killed the child! It was all my wicked temper because you sent me up-stairs. I have done all the mischief."

Lady Corbet was amazed. It was the first time Paulina had ever accused herself of a fault. She administered lectures and pardons all round, was certain they would never be so bad again, sent for some of the relics of the banquet to make them a feast, and, when it was plain that Paulina could not eat, made her a cup of tea (then a very uncommon luxury), and sent her to bed to sleep off her headache.

CHAPTER XV

THE FEVER.

ABOUT nine o'clock Lady Corbet came softly into the room where Betty had at last fallen into a quiet and sound slumber.

"Poor little dear!" said she, sadly, as she looked at the pale face of the little sleeper. "She really breathes more gently, does she not? How lucky that the doctor happened to be in the house! But, sweetheart, you must go and get some supper and a breath of fresh air, for I am sure you need it. And, my dear, will you, as you come back, just step in and see if Pall is asleep? The poor child is all but broken-hearted. I could not be hard upon her when I saw how sorry she was for her fault, especially as it is so rare for her to own herself in the wrong."

Winifred was rather unwilling to leave her charge,

but she was afraid of an argument on the subject which would waken Betty, so she slipped gently out of the room. She had eaten nothing since her twelve o'clock dinner, and felt herself refreshed by the delicate little supper which had been prepared for her by the motherly care of Lady Corbet. She went to the garden door to catch a breath of fresh air, but there seemed to be no air abroad. The heat was melting, and a low, heavy cloud brooded over the whole sky.

"What a stifling heat!" thought Winifred, drawing a long breath. "I wonder if it is any fresher on the top of Holford heath? It seems as though one breath smelling of the furze would put new life into my heart."

She drew another long breath, and went slowly up-stairs to Paulina's little chamber. She opened the door, and at first thought no one was in the room; but a closer inspection showed her Paulina, in her white night-dress, prostrate on the bare boards, her face hidden in her arms, and her whole body shaking with suppressed sobs.

"My poor, dear child!" said Winifred, kneeling beside her. "Why are you here, when you should be in bed and asleep?"

Paulina did not reply save by her deeper sobs.

"Even if you have done wrong, which I do not deny, you know there is forgiveness for the worst of sinners," continued Winifred, in soothing tones. "Do you not remember who it was that came into the world to save sinners?"

"*Don't*, Mrs. Evans!" interrupted Paulina, in tones of agony. "You will kill me. For three long years I have been trying to make myself a Christian, and I am no nearer to it than when I began. I have fasted and prayed, and done penance, and thought upon death and judgment, till my head was like to burst, and all to no purpose. I shall never be prepared for them nor for heaven!"

"Poor child!" said Winifred, soothingly, as Paulina dropped her head upon her arms with a fresh burst of sobs. "No wonder you are discouraged. Your efforts have been like your tapestry work. You have begun all wrong, and therefore it is no wonder that your labors have produced nothing but confusion. Do you remember what I told you about it—that you would never do anything with that piece, but you must begin anew?"

"Yes!" answered Paulina, interested, as it were, in spite of herself.

"And you found it so, did you not? You had to take all new materials—canvas, worsted, and

silk--after you had tried two or three days to rectify your mistakes. After that you went on prosperously enough."

"Well?" said Paulina.

"Well, Paulina, you have made the same mistake in your religion. You have begun wrong, and thus you have gone on from bad to worse; and if you were to go on forever, you can never get to heaven in this way, because you are not in the way thither."

"I don't know what you mean, Mrs. Winifred," said Paulina, both roused and piqued by this unexpected statement. "I don't know how one is to get to heaven except by being good."

"Then no one will ever go there, for assuredly no one was ever good enough yet. You are fond of saying that you know all the prayers in the church service, Paulina. Who is it who is said, in the Communion Service, to have made by His one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world?"

"Our Lord, of course!"

"Well, what was the need of His making that costly offering, if people can gain salvation and heaven by their own efforts without Him; above

all, if by penance and fasting they can make atonement for their own sins? No, no, my child, you are wrong. Do you think that by lying all night weeping on the ground you can blot out the evil you have done this day, and thus make your account even with the God you have offended?"

"No, oh, no!" cried Paulina, letting her head fall again. "Oh! if any penance, any pilgrimage, could make amend or restore my poor sister, how gladly would I do it!"

"But if the way is already provided whereby your sin may be blotted out as if it had never been," said Winifred; "if by no action upon your part, save sorrow for your sins and faith in your Saviour, you could settle all the long account against you and receive strength for all time to come, would it not be worth while to try? O Paulina! give up this wretched and false idea of earning the favor of God. Cast yourself just as you are—a poor, lost, dying sinner—utterly unworthy of anything save condemnation, upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ His Son, and beg forgiveness for His sake who died and rose again for you. Then indeed you may feel yourself forgiven. Then you will know what it is to love your Father in heaven as well as to fear Him: and humbled yet encouraged,

you may go on striving to please God, not because He is a hard and exacting master, but because He is a dear Father, who so loved you that He gave His own Son to die for you. I must go back to your sister now, but, Paulina, think of what I have said, and try to act upon it. And do not by thus exposing your health add to your mother's cares and anxieties. Believe me that is only another form of selfishness!"

"I will do as you tell me," said Paulina, submissively; "but oh! Mrs. Winifred, do not be hard upon me! I am so very, very unhappy!"

"But what is there to make you so unhappy, Paulina? Anything but what happened to-day?"

"Everything!" said Paulina, abruptly. "I wish I had never been born. But there, Betty will want you. Good-night!"

"I must indeed go to her!" said Winifred. "Good-night, my dear child, and may God bless you and teach you by His Holy Spirit!"

"Well, and how did you find Pall?" asked Lady Corbet.

"Very sad, madam; but I left her more quiet, and, I trust, in a way to be comforted. And now, let me beg you to rest, and leave our little one to my care."

The next morning found Betty decidedly improved, though very weak and languid, and much disposed to insist upon her privileges as an invalid, and keep the whole house waiting upon her. At last, however, she was prevailed upon to let Phyllis sit by her side and tell her stories, while Winifred refreshed herself with washing and dressing and a walk in the garden. She looked up at Paulina's window, but the curtain was drawn. Winifred gathered a handful of flowers and leaves, and made a couple of little nosegays to carry up to her patient. She peeped into Paulina's room, and found her awake, but not up.

"I do not know what is the matter with me," was her reply to Winifred's question; "but I cannot rise at all. I am so sick and giddy, and my head feels so strangely! I have been hot and cold by fits all night, and so thirsty I have drunk up all the water in the jug. But oh! please do open the window, and let in the fresh air. I am stifled in this close room."

Winifred undrew the curtains and let in the light and air. As she did so, she looked at Paulina, and her heart sank within her, for she thought she recognized in the girl's face the first signs of the dreadful fever which had swept away in five

weeks more than half the inhabitants of Bridgewater.

"Do not try to rise," said she. "You are not able. I will excuse you to madam your mother, and will bring the doctor to you when he comes to see Betty."

Paulina sank back on her pillow with a sigh, as though it were a sort of comfort to find herself relieved from exertion, and Winifred hastened down-stairs as she heard the doctor's foot ascending. He looked at Betty, pronounced her doing well, and quite won her heart by his jokes and a new picture-book, so that she readily agreed to stay in bed and play with her doll if only Phyllis might stay with her.

"If you please, madam, I should like the doctor to see Mrs. Paulina," said Winifred. "She seems to me far from well and is quite unable to rise."

The moment Doctor Mercer entered the room, he exchanged a glance with Winifred, which seemed to say on one side, "Do you know the state of the case?" and on the other, "Yes, I do."

Paulina was heavy and drowsy, answering intelligently when roused, but soon dropping off again. The doctor felt her pulse and head, examined her tongue, and asked many questions as to

how she had rested and how she had felt for some days back. Then he beckoned Lady Corbet out of the room.

"Your daughter is very ill, madam," said he, gravely, "and, I fear, is likely to be worse. She has every symptom of the prevailing fever."

Lady Corbet turned pale and trembled. She had the dread of infection common to the time, when, indeed, there was every excuse for it; since, owing to the manner of life and the ignorance of hygienic laws, almost all diseases took on an infectious character. But she was, as I have said, a woman great in emergencies, and it was but a moment before she recovered herself, and asked, anxiously indeed but calmly, what was to be done, and whether any measures could be taken to prevent the spread of the disease.

"You see, Doctor Mercer, I do not exactly know to whom to turn. Our old family doctor is lately dead, and Doctor Butler, who would be my next dependence, has turned papist, and can think of nothing but his crosses and medals and other popish trinkets, besides which he is not a man of such character as I should like to have about my young daughters. He hath made trouble in more

than one family. O doctor! if you could only stay and attend upon my children!"

The doctor smiled. "I have been thinking, madam, of spending some time in the West, specially for the purpose of studying this fever, which has made such ravages of late years. I shall be happy to attend your daughters, but I warn you that I am considered little better than a heretic by many of my medical brethren. I shall not bleed Mrs. Paulina, nor shut her up in a close room with neither air nor water."

"You shall do just as you please," said Lady Corbet, evidently greatly relieved. "To be sure, it does not seem very sensible to heat up folks that are burning up already."

"Have you servants upon whom you can rely?" asked Doctor Mercer.

"That I don't know," answered Lady Corbet. "There is Ashwell, who would go through fire and water to serve me, and scold and grumble at me all the time! But as for the rest, I cannot answer for them."

"This Mrs. Evans, now?" said the doctor, in an inquiring tone.

"Oh, yes; I doubt not she would be worth a host; but you see, Doctor Mercer, she is an orphan

child, and under no obligation to me, and I could not ask her to put her life in peril for a stranger."

"You are a good woman, I am sure of that," said the doctor, abruptly. "But the gentlewoman has been exposed already. Does not that make a difference?"

"I shall remain, of course," said Winifred, who had come to the door in time to hear the last few words. "If you, madam, will send some one to my aunt's to let her know the reason of my stay and to bring me some clothes, I shall remain with Mrs. Paulina till she is better. I am not afraid."

"But you do not, perhaps, understand the danger?" said the doctor, kindly.

"My grandfather and my mother, and many of our neighbors, died of the fever," replied Winifred. "I have nothing to hinder my staying, and I am not in the least afraid."

"But can you have your wits about you, and not go off in a fit yourself if your patient swoons or bleeds at the nose?" asked the doctor, gruffly. "The sick-room is no place for nervous fine ladies."

"I can do as I am bid," replied Winifred, simply.

"If you can, you are a wonderful woman and worth your weight in gold. Come with me, that I may tell you what to do."

Paulina grew rapidly worse, and by noon was utterly prostrated. Sir John, coming home to dinner, complained of headache and pains in all his joints; and though he made light of it, and declared that nothing ailed him but his yesterday's dinner, it was plain that the disease was upon him. By night he was unable to rise, and one of the 'prentice lads showed symptoms of coming down.

"Only think, Mrs. Evans," said Ashwell, as Winifred came down-stairs to prepare same gruel for her patient, "here have all the servants run away and left us—yes, every maid in the house, and the two men, and the knife-boy that my good lady took out of the very street, as a body may say —all gone but poor black Jack, who has hardly the sense of an ape and cannot talk like a Christian. Yes, every one, the ungrateful hussies, and after all the time I have spent teaching them, and my mistress giving them each a new gown only last quarter! And this new-fangled doctor, with his fancies about fresh air and cool water for Mrs. Paulina, as if any one ever heard of such a thing in a fever!"

"Why did not Jack go with the rest?" asked Winifred.

"Me not going to run away and leave my kind

massa what tooked me out of de ship, gave me good clothes and all, and missus that was always kind to poor Jack," said the negro, answering for himself. "Me stay and wait on my massa! Suppose I do get fever, what then? I got no fader nor muder, no wife, no babies! Suppose Jack die, he buried in the ground; there's an end of poor black man, unless maybe that good Lord Jesus my missus tell me 'bout come some day, and say, 'Get up, Jack, and come 'long with me!'"

"Just hear the poor creature!" said Ashwell, wiping the tears from her eyes. "Whoever thought of his having feeling like that? Well, Mrs. Evans, I suppose you will be going to leave us, like the rest?"

"No, Ashwell, I have no notion of going at present," replied Winifred, who was, as she well knew, no favorite with the spoiled and jealous old servant. "I am like poor Jack," she added, with a sad smile. "Suppose I do die, there is no one to cry for me. I shall not leave Lady Corbet so long as I can do anything for her."

"Mighty fine!" grumbled the old woman; "but who is to do all the work, I should like to know?"

"You and I, and poor Jack, and Mrs. Jem and Phyllis—begging their pardon for putting them in

such company,"- replied Winifred, smiling. "As for what cannot be done, we must just leave it undone; and I am sure Jack will help us all he is able."

"Yes, dat I will, young missus!" replied Jack, briskly. "Me could cook de dinner as well as dat greasy Jenny Cook," he added, with an injured air, "only Missis Ashwell she never tink Jack know nothing!"

"Yes, you look like it!" said Ashwell, and then added, in a softer tone, "I dare say you would do your best."

"I should not wonder if he did know how! said Winifred. "I have heard my father say that some of the best cooks he ever saw were West India negroes."

"Dat de livin' truth, young missus!" said Jack, eagerly. "My moder she cook for old massa, and I learnt all her ways, for I was big boy before massa sold me. You just let me try, that's all!"

"Well, well, we will see! See who is knocking there!"

The knocker was no less a person than Dame Evans herself. That good woman had been thrown into ten times more than her usual fume and flutter by the receipt of her niece's note, which she

had been unable to read till her husband came home. Then indeed there was a breeze. Dame Evans wept and scolded—declared that there never was such an unlucky woman, and that everything turned out just to spite her.

"Here, just as we had made up our minds to go out into the country—to the very house this wilful, troublesome girl was born in and was always raving about—and an awful piece of work it will be, no doubt, and endless damage—Winifred must go and expose herself to the fever, so that we cannot take her without danger to all our precious lives. And as if that were not enough, she must go and make up her mind to stay and nurse these gentlefolks, who are neither kith nor kin to her. I declare it is enough to provoke a saint!" concluded Dame Evans, in her usual style.

"Since you could not take her without danger, it is well that she has made up her mind to remain with my Lady Corbet!" observed Dame Joyce, who had run in to hear and tell the latest news about the fever, the Irish army King James was bringing over, and the dreadful doings of the papists. "The Corbets are fine, open-handed people, and can pay them that serve them—that is one thing."

"And suppose they can—is that any reason my

niece should endanger her precious life and put me to all this inconvenience?" said Dame Evans, turning angrily upon her visitor. "Thank goodness, we are not dependent upon the pay of great folks, nor need to be, seeing we have means of our own, and know how to use them too, if we don't wear lace whisks and camlet gowns every day!" casting a glance of supreme contempt upon the somewhat superabundant finery of the goldsmith's wife.

Good, easy Dame Joyce laughed, and addressed herself to Master Evans.

"And so you are going out into the country, for all the world like gentlefolks. But maybe you will not be so much better off, for they say the fever was very bad at Bridgewater last time. Who knows," she added mischievously, "that the seeds of the fever may not be remaining in the house, since your father and sister died of it, and the place has been shut up for so long?"

"I'll tell you what, Mistress Joyce, you are not so judge every one by yourself," said Dame Evans, sharply. "You won't find any slat-holes or filthy, dirty cupboards about my place, or my sister's either, for ill smells and sickness to lurk in. It is my opinion that if folks were as careful as they

should be to keep clean and decent, we should not have so much of these fevers!" A remark in which the good woman was undoubtedly correct.

"Well, well, dame, we will not quarrel about that!" said Mrs. Joyce. "What are you going to do about your niece?"

"I'm sure I don't know!" said Dame Evans, pettishly. "I don't quite like to leave her behind, but I don't see how we are to take her, now that she has been exposed to the fever."

"Yes, and so bad as they have it, too!" said Mrs. Joyce, who seemed to take delight in tormenting her neighbor. "Their servants have all run away men and maids and all, except old Sarah Ashwell and the blackamoor who waits on Sir John."

"Winifred must do as she thinks right," said Master Evans, who had not spoken before. "If the family is in such straits, I do not believe she will leave them, nor can I blame her if she does not. Nevertheless she must have the choice of going with us or staying behind, as she thinks best. Perhaps, when she knows we are going to the Stonehill farm, she may change her mind."

"And that is true, too!" said Dame Evans. "I will see her this afternoon, and I doubt not I can bring her to reason. She has been well brought

up—not like some people's children, left to go to rack and ruin, while their mother goes about the street to show her finery."

Dame Evans always bestowed these hints and innuendoes upon her easy-tempered neighbor in great abundance : nevertheless she would have felt herself much aggrieved if Dame Joyce had not run in at least every other day to give her the news of the street and the city.

Dame Evans dressed herself with extra care for walking, and, having set the little girls their tasks of knitting and sewing, she sallied out and took her way to Sir John Corbet's house, fortifying her mind with all the arguments she could think of wherewith to overcome Winifred's obstinacy. She would not come within the door, but remained in the court while Jack called Winifred out of the housekeeper's room.

"There, don't come too near me, child!" said Dame Evans, shrinking back. "I suppose you have just come from that poor young lady's sick-bed."

"Yes, I have been over her all day," replied Winifred. "Will you come into the house, aunt, or will you walk into the garden?"

"Let us go into the garden," said Dame Evans,

though she felt a great desire to see the fine house of which she had heard so much. "We shall be in the fresh air at least."

Winifred opened the gate which led into the garden, and conducted her aunt to a pleasant little arbor at the opposite end from the house.

"Well, this is a fine place, to be sure!" said Dame Evans, looking about her. "What a large garden, and what a great house! Which is Mrs. Paulina's room, now?"

"That one with the projecting window and the open casement."

"You don't mean to say you leave the window open, and she lying ill of a fever!" exclaimed Dame Evans, in horror. "What can you be thinking of, child? 'Tis enough to be her death!"

"It is by the doctor's orders," said Winifred. "He is a new doctor from London, who is taking care of the family."

"Aye, some of those new-fangled notions! No doubt, he must be setting up to know more than all his elders and betters. Tis the way of this age! I dare say the poor child will die, and Sir John too."

"Almost every one does die who has the fever, anyway," observed Winifred. "Perhaps it may

be well to try some new method, since the old ones certainly seem to answer no good purpose."

"Well, well, 'twas not for that I came," said Dame Evans, pettishly. "I want to know what you mean, Winifred, by staying here in this plague-stricken house? Why did you not come home directly Mrs. Paulina was taken? And now they say all the maids have run away—idle, cowardly jades! I'll be bound I'd teach them! And who is to do anything?"

"Why, aunt, it seems to me that I should have been as bad as the maids, if I had gone away and left the family in their distress!" said Winifred. "Why not?"

"Why not, gurtha! Why, because they are hired servants bound to stay till their quarter-day, whatever happens! Do you mean to even yourself to a common serving-wench?"

"No, and for that reason I would not be willing to leave in their trouble a family who have been kind to me. The maids are poor, ignorant creatures, of whom we cannot expect a great deal. I should not like to show that I am worth no more than they!" added Winifred, smiling.

"Well, well!" said her aunt, somewhat taken aback by being thus met on her own ground, "all

that does not signify. What I want to know is, whether you will go out to Stonehill farm with us to-morrow or no. The house is empty, and business here is dull, besides that the fever is already growing bad down by the water-side, and you uncle hath concluded to take a holiday for once and go into the country for a month. He says that you shall have your choice, for all you have behaved so ill, and are just as like as not to bring the fever among us," added the dame, falling into her usual grumbling strain; "but you must make up your mind quickly."

For one moment Winifred's heart bounded. To see the old place once more—to visit all the old haunts where she had walked with her mother—to go over the Hall and the gardens, and walk across the moor to Dame Sprat's old cottage! But long before Dame Evans had finished her speech, Winifred's mind was made up.

She glanced up at Paulina's casement, and then at the window of the school-room, where she could see the little girl anxiously watching her. Then she thought how lonely and sad all the old haunts would seem, with none of the dear familiar faces—the once cheerful farm-house under the different rule of her aunt, who never allowed any one about

her to be happy if she could help it; and she felt as if she had little to regret.

"No, aunt, I cannot go!" she replied. "It would not be right, as you say, to expose you all to the fever, and besides I am needed here. Madam must needs be with Sir John, and Ashwell will have her hands full, besides that she will not follow the doctor's rules in anything. Then there is Betty, who will mind no one but me. No, I do not see well how I can go."

"Mighty well!" grumbled her aunt, who, though inwardly relieved by Winifred's decision, was not disposed to let it pass without a proper amount of fault-finding. "Mighty fine, indeed! I suppose you learned all that out of your books that you are always poring over? To my mind, such fine notions are only fit for gentlefolks—though I suppose you think yourself a gentlewoman, as good as the best Look out for yourself, that is my notion!"

"But, aunt, the Bible"——

"Oh, don't go talking to me about the Bible, Mrs. Winifred!" retorted the dame, not unwilling to work herself into a passion, that she might stifle certain unpleasant qualms of conscience. "The Bible is all well enough for Sundays and such like, and for sick people, maybe · but I never saw

any good come of those folks who are always making a fuss about the Bible and religion. They were just the people who got up Monmouth's war, and made all that distress. If there is anything I do despise, it is a hypocrite. But your uncle says you are to have your own way, so I must e'en leave you to your own destruction!" added Dame Evans, in whose mind existed a great contention between her selfish fears and her real affection for her niece. "'Twill be worth a fortune to you if you do live through it, that is one thing, for the Corbets are generous people, and they will never forget it of you. I should not wonder if it should be the making of you. But then, if you should die!"

"Then I shall go home, indeed!" said Winifred, with her sad smile; "and that will be better than going to Stonehill."

"Mrs. Evans, here's Missy Polly a-calling for you!" called Jack.

"Ah, the ugly ape! How any one can bear a blackamoor about them, I can't tell!" said Dame Evans, rising.

"Well, good-bye, lovey! Take care of yourself!" And her heart getting for once the better of her fears, she threw both her arms round her niece, and kissed her, crying heartily. "Whatever happens,

I will always say that you have been a good, duti ful girl—that you have! I will send by the 'pren tice lad all your things, and as to the money you have earned"——

"Dear aunt, please keep that, and buy with it the pair of pewter tankards you liked so much, to remember your little Winifred! I have money by me, and Lady Corbet will let me want for nothing."

"Well, well, we shall see about that. But, Winifred"—turning back at the last moment—"is it true that Mrs. Paulina has turned papist?"

"No, I should think not," answered Winifred. "I have seen no signs of it."

"Well, all I know is that neighbor Joyce says so, and pretends that she had her news from her sister Jones, who is a papist herself. Dame Joyce says she has been seen talking with that Doctor Butler they make such a fuss about, and people talk of her giving him meetings and going to confession. Moreover she is sure that she herself saw Mrs. Paulina in the new Romish chapel on Ascension day, whither she went herself—more shame to her —to see the sights. She says Mrs. Paulina had her hood pulled over her face, but she knew her directly!"

"I hardly think that can be true. Dame Joyce must be mistaken."

"Not she! She has eyes in the back of her head, I think. Well, farewell, sweetheart, and God bless thee!"

Winifred returned to the chamber of her patient, too much startled by what she had just heard to think as much as she would otherwise have done of the parting with her aunt. She could not believe the story, and yet, if it were true, it explained many little things which had puzzled her. Paulina's severe penances—her evident desire of late to avoid the Bible readings—her self-righteous notions—her reserved and burdened air, as if she had always something to conceal—all tended that way! Nay, upon that very Ascension-day, Paulina had refused to go to church with the rest on the ground of a headache, which excuse was fully borne out by her paleness and her heavy, downcast eyes. She remembered, too, that, when they returned, Paulina was nowhere to be found, and that by-and-by she had come in from the garden, looking flurried and flushed. Could it possibly be that the girl was deceiving her parents and all about her? And if so, what could be done about the matter?

The last year of James the Second's most unfortunate reign was one of great activity among that portion of the English Roman Catholics—not by any means the most respectable or intelligent portion —who with the king were guided by the counsels of the Jesuits rather than by those of the pope. What might be called the Country party believed with the pontiff that James was injuring the cause instead of benefiting it, and that a reaction must inevitably follow, which would leave the English Roman Catholics in a worse position than ever. Events proved them to have been in the right; but nothing could induce the king or his advisers to pause in their career. A good many people joined themselves to them, some from policy, some, no doubt, from sincere conviction, and the new recruits were more zealous than those who had grown up in the faith from their childhood.

Amongst the most important converts in the city of Bristol was the Doctor Butler who has been more than once mentioned. Though considered a skilful physician, he had never been a man of good character, and more than one family had had reason to repent the confidence placed in him. Since his conversion by Father Hewling, the principal Jesuit in the city, he had professed great repentance for

his former misleeds, and an equal desire to atone for them by his zeal in the new religion; but Father Kennedy, the harmless, good-natured old secular priest who had looked after the spiritual interests of the few old Catholic families in Bristol for thirty years, shook his head and raised his eyebrows when the doctor was mentioned, and would not say one word in his favor.

Winifred found Paulina roused from her stupor, and raving in delirium, declaring that Ashwell meant to suffocate her. With some trouble she was persuaded to lie down, and her face being bathed with rose-water, and the casement opened, she soon became quiet again.

"Very well, Mrs. Evans, mighty well, indeed!" said the old woman, trembling with rage. "Only when you are called to account for the death of that dear child, don't blame me! As if I, that nursed her and her sister from their birth, and took care of all my five sisters in the fever when they every one died, was to be taught my duty by a chit like you!"

"But, Mrs. Ashwell, such are the doctor's orders! It is none of my doing."

"Yes, you and your new-fangled doctor! Well, well, I wash my hands of it!" And the old woman

hobbled down stairs, muttering to herself that it should go hard but she would get better advice for her darling—that she would, indeed!

All day long did Winifred go from one sick-room to another, and from the kitchen to the school-room An attempt had been made to isolate the three younger girls, but it was found impracticable, and they were merely kept out of the presence of the sufferers. Even this did not seem likely to be possible for any great length of time, since Sir John claimed the whole of Lady Corbet's attention, with what help she could receive from black Jack; and Ashwell's inveterate prejudice against the doctor made her worse than useless in the sick-room.

The little girls were very good, waiting upon themselves and making a conscience of doing some part of their usual tasks every day. They were very kind and patient with Betty, and Betty herself, warned by the violence of her late attack, and helped by the forbearance with which she was treated, had fewer "tantrums," as Ashwell called them, than ever before in her life.

Paulina's case was the worst of all. Day by day she sank more and more under the power of the disease, her lucid intervals became fewer, and her

delirium worse in its character. Doctor Mercer came to see her twice a day, and sometimes oftener, but all his remedies seemed powerless to arrest the course of the disease. He had become very popular among the poorer class in the city, helped, probably, by the fact that he gave away liberally both advice and medicine; but few of the upper classes employed him, and by most of the medical fraternity he was denounced in no measured terms. What indeed was to be expected of a man who would have the casements of his patients' rooms opened all day, and sometimes all night, and allowed the sick to drink as much cold water as they desired!

"Well, and how is our young lady to-day?" he asked, one morning, of Winifred, as she met him at the door of Paulina's room.

"Worse and worse!" said Winifred, with tears in her eyes. "She has not spoken or shown any sign of sense since midnight."

"Aye, I think this will be the crisis," said the doctor, as he examined the patient, whose senses now appeared closed to all external impressions, while her sunken features seemed already to have assumed the immobility of death. "You must not be discouraged, however. The case is not yet

hopeless so long as she can swallow ; but you must watch her carefully, for the next twenty-four hours will decide the question of life or death. I have not seen so bad a case as hers among any of my Protestant patients."

"Is the fever, then, worse among the papists?" asked Winifred.

"The worst cases I have met with seem to have been among those who were at the new Romish chapel on Ascension-day," replied the doctor. "It seems there was a great crowd, and the heat was intense. I suppose I have had at least twenty cases which originated there, all taken down at once. And, by the way, this young lady was attacked at the very same time. It can hardly be, I suppose, that she was among them?"

Winifred thought, with a start, of her aunt's gossip, which had nearly faded from her mind.

"I cannot believe it!" said she. "Lady Corbet would never allow such a thing, and I cannot think Mrs. Paulina would deceive her parents. She always went to the early morning prayers at the cathedral, rather against the will of her mother, who, however, permitted it, partly because Mrs. Paulina was delicate, and the walk was thought good for her."

"Did she go alone?" asked Doctor Mercer.

"No, one of the maids, who lately left us, went with her."

"Hath she ever seemed to you to have any burden upon her mind?"

"I have sometimes thought so, especially during the two weeks before she was taken ill. But why do you ask, Doctor Mercer? Have you any suspicions?" asked Winifred.

"I can hardly tell you why, but I certainly have!" answered Doctor Mercer. "You know the Jesuits are making converts all over the nation. I will not conceal from you, Mrs. Evans, that I have heard some such reports about this poor young lady, and I fear she may have fallen among the Philistines, as the phrase is. But that is not our business just now. We will bring our patient through the present distress, if possible, and then we will see what can be done."

Doctor Mercer gave Winifred very particular directions about the treatment of Paulina, charging her to watch her most carefully, visited the other patients and pronounced them to be going on favorably, all but coaxed old Ashwell into a good humor, and then went home to snatch such rest as he could before he should be called out again.

The day waned into evening, and still Paulina continued apparently unconscious and motionless, though she swallowed what was put into her mouth. The house grew still as the grave, save where a mouse squeaked or rattled down the wall, or some of those unaccountable creaks and rustlings which are always to be heard by a watcher in an old house, made themselves audible. The night drew towards dawn, and still there was no change. At last a bird chirped in the dark garden below, and was answered by another.

"Winifred!" said a faint, oh, such a faint voice from the bed, "are you here, Winifred?"

"Yes, dear child!" answered Winifred, striving to speak calmly, although her heart bounded as if she had heard a voice from the dead. "You are better, are you not?"

"Winifred!" said Paulina, arresting her hand as she put a spoonful of wine and water to the parched lips, "it is all true—all the doctor said! I heard, though I could not speak. It is all true!"

"Do not talk now, Paulina," said Winifred. "I trust you are better, and that you will have ample time to say all you wish; but you must not speak now. Your life depends upon your keeping quiet."

"I *must!*" said Paulina, detaining Winifred's hand with more force than seemed possible in her weak state. "I shall not be better till this is off my mind. Is my father living?"

"Yes, and going on well. Your mother is with him."

"My sisters?"

"Are all well, as yet. Dear Paulina, be quiet, I beseech you!"

"I tell you, Winifred, I *must* speak!" said Paulina, almost fiercely. "I must tell the truth before I die! Listen, that you may tell my parents, if I do not see them again!"

Winifred felt, for a moment, in an agony of indecision and distress. The next, her own calm, good sense, and the habit of looking to a Higher Power for aid, quieted her, and she made up her mind what to do.

"Speak then, dear, if it will relieve your mind; but be short. You wish to tell me that you were at the Romish chapel on Ascension-day?"

"Yes, and before—many times!"

Paulina's voice was weak, and she spoke with many pauses, but her words were clear and coherent, and her skin felt cool and natural.

"When you thought I went to the cathedral—I went to the chapel!"

"But Molly?" exclaimed Winifred, astonished.

"I bribed her. She waited outside. It was Doctor Butler who took me there. I met him at my cousin's, and then at my Lady Germaine's. They are Catholics, you know; but she was not to blame, nor Father Kennedy. They said I was deceiving my parents—that it would come to no good. Doctor Butler took me to Father Hewling. They flattered and coaxed me, especially Doctor Butler."

"But how could you have anything to do with him?" Winifred could not help saying. "You knew what a bad man he has been, and all the trouble he made in your cousin Chester's family. It has been town talk!"

"I was a conceited fool!" said Paulina. "He made me think myself a martyr and a saint, and persuaded me to deceive my mother. I was wretched all the time. I see all now—all so clearly!"

"You mean that you see the truth now," said Winifred, fearing the effect of every word, yet desiring, for the sake of the poor girl's parents, to have something of comfort to repeat.

"Yes, indeed—all! Winifred, say those verses in the Communion Service."

Winifred's gentle voice repeated the "comfortable words." Paulina caught eagerly at the last verse. "Yes, that is it! He is the propitiation. It has all been made plain to me the last few hours! I could think, though I could not speak. Oh, how I have been misled!"

"Paulina, you must not say one word more!" said Winifred, with the authority she well knew how to assume. "I shall find it hard to answer to the doctor for what has already passed. Now take some more wine, be silent, and let me read you to sleep.

"Pray—pray!" said Paulina, eagerly, "for forgiveness—that I may make amends to my dear parents!"

Winifred knelt by the bedside, and prayed as desired, and then, softly repeating psalms and verses of Scripture, she had at last the satisfaction of seeing her patient sink into a quiet sleep. She herself was worn out by watching, and, leaning her head upon the bedside, she slumbered for half an hour, starting like a guilty creature, as the first rays of the sun aroused her. Full of terror and reproach, she glanced at her patient. Paulina was

sleeping, her breathing faint indeed, but regular, while a change, indescribable save to those who have seen it, had come over her face.

"Surely, surely she must be—she is better!" thought Winifred. "Oh, if she is but spared after all!"

She drew the curtain to shut out the sun, and as she did so the sick girl awoke—not as before to muttering delirium or sad, half-conscious moaning, but with a look of full reason and a faint, but natural smile.

"You are better, sweetheart!" said Winifred, bending over her.

"O yes! Surely I am better! My mind and body are in most bland ease. Is this the lighting up before death of which I have heard, or am I going to get well?"

Winifred half feared the first, and anxiously did she await the doctor's opinion. He came very early, with his soft footstep, and entered the room before she was aware of his presence. His first look reassured her.

"Here is a change indeed!" said he, cheerily, as he examined the patient. "You mean to do me credit yet, I see, my fair mistress."

"Then she is really better!" said Winifred,

hardly able to credit the words she had so earnestly desired to hear.

"Of course! Cannot you see for yourself?" returned the doctor, roughly but kindly. I do not say we are out of the woods yet, but with care and good nursing, I trust we shall do well."

"I shall be sure to be well nursed while I have Winifred!" said Paulina, smiling.

"See you do as she bids you, then. And look you, young lady, I will have no talking. I am Fine Ear the fairy, and can tell when my patients are misbehaving, though I were at the other end of the town; so do not think to deceive me!"

"I will not," said Paulina, sadly smiling. "I have had enough of that!"

"Yes, I should think so!" muttered the doctor. "Now, Mrs. Winifred, since that is your name, come with me that I may give you further directions."

As they left the room, they met Ashwell, so near the door that it seemed as if she must have been listening. The old woman trembled visibly as the doctor's eye fell upon her, and seemed as if she would have shrunk out of sight, but he called her.

"See here, Dame Ashwell! Do you sit by Mrs.

Paulina awhile, and let our other nurse rest for a few minutes. Give her the wine and water every half hour, and do not let her talk.—I believe that old woman has a hand in this business!" he added, as they passed on down-stairs. "I saw her last night, as I came down the street, talking with Butler at the garden gate."

"I cannot think so," said Winifred. "She is a zealous Protestant. She has talked sometimes of getting better advice for her young lady, for she is as much alarmed as my aunt at the fresh air and cold water. It might be that which took her to Doctor Butler."

"Possibly. Well, Mrs. Evans, I have run the fox to earth at last, I do believe! I have heard the whole tale of Mrs. Paulina's church-goings."

"And so have I," said Winifred.

"Indeed! From whom?"

"From the culprit herself." And Winifred repeated what had passed, adding: "I feared it was wrong to let her talk, but I saw that she would never rest while it was on her mind."

"You acted sensibly, as usual. Well, you must know, I was called last night, as soon as I left here, to see a poor woman not far from the water-side. I knew the moment I set eyes on her that she had

not a chance, and I suppose she read it in my face, for she fell a-screaming and crying, and calling for a clergyman, that she might free her mind. I sent a lad for Mr. Gunnison, who hath been unwearied in visiting the poor (as I must say, so have most of the city clergy), but he had gone out, so I was fain to do what I could to take his place, at least so far as to comfort the poor creature by Scripture and prayers. But she said she must tell what was on her mind, and at last out it came—that she had been bribed by Mrs. Paulina and Doctor Butler both, to be a sort of go-between ; that she had carried messages, and had gone with Paulina to chapel when her friends supposed her at church ; and she feared she had been the ruin of her dear young lady. I was startled at first, and did not know what to fear, but she guessed my thought, and eagerly assured me that I was mistaken ; that Mrs. Paulina had never been alone with the man nor with the priest, but would always have her near, though not to hear what they said. She begged me to ask forgiveness of Sir John and Lady Corbet, who, she said, had ever been good to her, and of Mrs. Paulina ; and died at last, poor thing, in great distress, though I believe sincerely penitent."

"Poor Molly!" said Winifred. "She was a great favorite with madam and with Ashwell, but she was the first to desert us. I am heartily glad the truth has come out in time to save further mischief. But is it not strange that my old Lady Germaine, who has always been a friend to this family, should not have told Lady Corbet what was going on?"

"She hardly dared go as far as that, I suppose," remarked the doctor. "I believe many of the old Catholic families are grieved and distressed at the present state of things, and their position is a very painful one; for of course, if they say a word, they are taxed by the zealous party as being lukewarm and betrayers of the Church. Truly this nation is in evil case! Are you feeling quite well this morning?" he asked, changing the subject abruptly and scrutinizing Winifred's face closely.

"I feel more tired than usual, and my head seems both drowsy and confused," replied Winifred. 'I suppose it comes from want of sleep."

"I should not wonder," returned the doctor, dryly. "Few people learn to do without sleep altogether, though we doctors come near to it in these times. You must lie down this morning and have a good nap. I do not quite like trusting

Ashwell with our patient, either, but I see no help for it."

"Doctor Mercer," said Winifred, gravely, "I think we should call Lady Corbet and tell her all we know of this distressful matter. She is a lady of great sense and discernment where her children are concerned, and will know what is the best course in the present conjuncture."

"I believe you are right. The straight course is best in the end; and though I dread adding to her burdens, I think, with you, that she should know the whole."

Lady Corbet was therefore called out of Sir John's room, and Winifred related the story, interrupted by many tears and exclamations of distress and wonder from the poor mother.

"That I should have been so deceived by my own child, whom I believed to be the pattern of truth, for all her peevish ways! And my old Lady Germaine, that I thought such a friend!"

"I imagine she had little free-will," remarked the doctor.

"To be sure, I remember now she hath of late given me many hints as to letting the girls go out without me, and allowing them so much liberty," resumed Lady Corbet; "but she is always giving

advice, poor old lady, and she thinks the young women of the present day are allowed too much license. And Molly, whom I thought such a good girl! And that wretch, Doctor Butler! Well, thank Heaven, Mrs. Winifred, I have you and Ashwell left, and upon you I can depend!"

"I am not so sure of Ashwell," said the doctor, and he related what he had seen the evening before Lady Corbet wrung her hands in renewed distress, but, suddenly collecting herself, she spoke with much dignity and feeling.

"I thank you, Doctor Mercer, and you, Winifred, for the way in which you have dealt in this delicate matter. I need not say how necessary it is for my poor child's sake, that nothing should transpire out of the family more than has already. I will myself stay with Pall, while Winifred rests. Jack can easily do all which is needed for Sir John, who sleeps almost all the time. You, Winifred, will go to your own room and take a good rest, which I am certain you need. God bless you, my dear! It was a happy day which brought you to this house"

Ashwell had established herself in Paulina's room, and was evidently taken very much aback by her lady's orders "to betake herself to the kitchen, see

that things were made decent and comfortable, and have Sir John's broth ready against he needed it." She began to say something about Jack's making the broth, but was cut very short, and went down-stairs, muttering to herself as usual.

"Not a word, my poor maid!" said Lady Corbet, as Paulina began to speak. "I have heard all, and you have my full and free pardon, so long as you do not attempt to deceive me again. I take blame to myself as a careless mother"——

"No, no!" interrupted Paulina. "It was my pride and self-conceit—thinking myself wiser than all the world!"

"Well, well, we will let by-gones be by-gones as your father's Scotch cousin hath it," said her mother, smiling, and kissing her. "I will not deny that you have always been somewhat prone to be wiser than your elders, since you used to advise me upon household matters before you could speak plain. Show that you have learnt more wisdom by obeying the doctor's orders, and not trying to talk when you are forbid to speak a word! There, that smile is more like my own little Pall than aught I have seen this many a day."

Winifred had a long and deep sleep, and awoke

feeling somewhat giddy and confused. A plentiful ablution of cold water and the process of dressing refreshed her. Startled to find by the striking of the clock how long she had slept, she went straight down to the housekeeper's room, where she was amazed at finding Ashwell drowned in tears and sobs. Her first thought was that Paulina was worse, perhaps dying.

"No, no!" sobbed Ashwell. "Poor dear, she is better, if I have not killed her! But oh, Mrs. Winifred, intercede with my lady for me. I meant no harm, and if I had but known that he was trying to make a papist of Mrs. Pall, I would never have come near him; but I thought the doctor was killing her, and the windows open and all"——

Ashwell became totally incoherent, and her words were drowned in sobs.

"What do you mean, Ashwell?" asked Winifred, bewildered. "What has happened?"

It was not easy to get at the story, but at last Winifred extracted from the weeping old woman, that, being dissatisfied with the new doctor's treatment, she had been holding secret conferences with Doctor Butler as to her darling's health, and had finally undertaken to introduce him into the

house, that he might judge of the patient's state. She had calculated very nicely that she would be called upon to sit with her young lady while Winifred rested, and Lady Corbet was busy with Sir John and making her morning visit to the schoolroom. She had agreed with Doctor Butler to be in the garden at that hour, when she would bring him in by the little turret staircase which opened near Paulina's room.

All these plans had been disconcerted by the straightforward counsels of Winifred and the doctor, and also by a very simple accident. Paulina had expressed a wish for some flowers, and her mother, always kind and desirous by every means in her power to show that she had fully forgiven the poor child, went down to the garden to gather them. In so doing, she came upon Ashwell in close conference with Butler, and heard enough of their conversation to discover their design. She had confronted them on the spot, ordered Butler from the premises, and taken possession of the keys of the gate; and had then sternly given Ashwell warning, saying she would have no traitors about her. The poor old soul, who had been totally innocent of any connivance at the doctor's proselyting schemes, was thunder-struck at the

treachery of her ally and the anger of her lady, and implored Winifred to intercede for her. Winifred, thankful that the matter was no worse, soothed and quieted her, promised to see what could be done, persuaded Ashwell to busy herself in sending up an unusually dainty dinner to the school-room, and finally left her in a tolerably reasonable and comfortable frame of mind. It was long before Lady Corbet would listen to any plea on her behalf, but at last her own good-nature and Winifred's influence prevailed, and she was brought to tell Ashwell that, for the sake of Mrs. Evans' intercession, she would pass over the present offence. It was a bitter pill to poor Ashwell, after all her years of service, to be forgiven for the sake of one on whom she had always looked with jealousy and contempt; but love for her lady and her nurselings prevailed over every other consideration.

It was well that it was so; for the very next day poor little Betty was attacked with the fever, and died after only a week's illness; and on the day of her burial, Winifred was taken with the same disease, and was declared by the doctor to be in the utmost danger. Her system was prostrated by all the fatigue she had undergone, and it would be all but a miracle if she lived through it.

CHAPTER XVI.

SURPRISES.

MORE than two months had passed since the date of the last chapter. The household of Sir John Corbet had returned to its old, regular routine. New servants had replaced the old. Sir John once more went to his office and wharf, and superintended his workmen; and his lady, like the wise dame of the Scriptures, looked well to the ways of her household, and, while she made sure that nobody from herself to the knife-boy ate the bread of idleness, took more pains than ever that every one under her roof should be happy and contented. In the school-room there was a great change. Poor little Betty, with her moods and tenses, her alternations of high and low spirits, her unmanageable "tantrums," and her almost equally unmanageable fits of penitence, was gone, and the

twins, Phillis and Jemima, could only weep over every little memorial of their departed sister, and declare to each other that they would never, no, never tease anybody again! Paulina, still pale and thin, and showing signs of recent illness in her hollow eyes and close-cropped hair, had taken present charge of the school-room, and was hearing her sisters' lessons, finding out every day how much less she knew than she supposed, discovering the mighty difference which existed between the real crosses of her reduced strength and the daily trials of temper and patience in the school-room, and those artificial crosses she used to manufacture for herself. Nevertheless, she went on bravely, doing her best, and making herself more useful and agreeable than she had ever done before. But Paulina had a cross to bear far harder than any petty trials of the school-room—a cross all the sharper because she had brought it upon herself and her father and mother, who shared the burden with her. The affair with Doctor Butler had taken wing, as was to be expected, and the whole city of Bristol rang with the stories of Paulina's stolen interviews with him, at chapel and elsewhere, and of the attempt to introduce him into her room Who had chattered in the last case nobody knew

but the scandal had gone abroad, distorted and exaggerated in a hundred forms. Paulina never stirred away from home, save under her mother's wing, and then only to church; but even there she felt herself the mark for curious eyes and whispers, while her mother had to encounter condolences and questions from all her acquaintances. Moreover, Paulina was not safe even yet from persecution. It had indeed been found expedient for Doctor Butler to leave town; but the priests had no notion of giving up their victim so easily, and more than one letter had been conveyed to Paulina, now pitying her as a martyr under persecution, now threatening her as a relapsed heretic. Meantime a cloud rested upon her reputation. None of her young friends visited her or invited her, and Lady Corbet was blamed for permitting her to take the charge of her young sisters. Her father had been furiously angry upon hearing the story, and, though he had been brought to say at last that he forgave her, he was hard and stern toward her, and showed her constantly that she was distrusted and watched. Her mother was kindness itself; but a heavy cloud of sadness rested upon her once cheery face, and her voice, when she spoke to Paulina, had a tone of grief and pity.

All this was very hard to bear—far harder than the fasting, the lying upon the floor, and all the other penances Paulina had been accustomed to practise; harder than the being obliged to give her attention to her work and pick it out when it was wrong; than being reproved for stooping her shoulders or poking her chin, or having her shoes down at heel and her petticoats draggled. Nor was this the hardest, after all. It was with inexpressible bitterness that Paulina heard of Doctor Butler's attempt to enter her room, and of his departure from the city, and learned from the pain the news gave her that her affections were no longer in her own keeping. Any woman worthy of the name must feel a sensation of intensest shame and anguish, when she finds herself loving one who does not care for her, even though that one may be in every way worthy; and the shame is increased twofold if the object prove utterly base. This was Paulina's case. She loved Doctor Butler, and she knew him to be a base, bad man—one who had destroyed the peace and reputation of more than one woman, and who might, but for what seemed the special interference of Providence, have done the same for her.

She recalled a hundred things which might have

shown her her danger, and she felt a sense of gratitude to poor Molly, who had been so far faithful that she had never let her young mistress out of her sight. She said to herself that her love was unworthily placed, and must be conquered; but the task was a hard one, and the poor girl was indeed very unhappy.

Yet it somehow happened that the real trials did not fret Paulina's temper or wear out her patience as the imaginary ones had done. She was sad indeed, and often much depressed, but she was no longer fretful or peevish; she no longer wore her set, self-conscious expression, or spoke and moved like an automaton. She had found the secret of peace. In the time of her trouble she had sought the Lord, and found in Him not only forgiveness and remission of sin, but strength to resist temptation, to bear suffering with patience and humility. Her service was no longer one of constraint and fear but of love—no longer the enforced task of a slave, but the free gift of a child.

The twins, on their part, sobered by the trouble they had passed through, and pitying Paulina for the sorrow they only half understood, did their best, both in work and lessons, to please their sister and mother; and the school-room labors went on

harmoniously and pleasantly enough for the most part, though now and then was heard a deep sigh or an impatient interjection, always followed by the exclamation: "I do wish Mrs. Winifred would get well, don't you, Pall?" answered by, "Yes, indeed I do, with all my heart!"

And where, all this time, was Mrs. Winifred? In the great chintz bedroom, the very best room in the house, whither she had been carried by Lady Corbet's orders when stricken down with the fever, waited upon and tended by every one, from Sir John himself down to black Jack; nursed with jealous care by Ashwell, and visited by Doctor Mercer every day, and by Paulina every hour. She had passed the crisis of the disease, contrary to everybody's expectation, and Doctor Mercer said there seemed no reason why she should not get well; but day after day passed, and still she lay on her couch or leaned back languidly in the great chair, pale, thin, and weak, unable to eat, to talk, to employ herself in any way more than a few minutes at a time. It seemed as if the excitement and fatigue of nearly three years past had made themselves felt all at once. For the first time in her life Winifred lost the control of her own mind and feelings. She could not think clearly

of anything for five minutes at a time. She could not fix her mind upon the things she had always loved best; or drive away the sadness, the discontent, the wretched forebodings, the distrust of her heavenly Father's love, the doubts of His truth which assailed her. Good Mr. Gunnison, who was instructing the twins preparatory to their approaching confirmation, talked and prayed with her, and in these visits Winifred found great comfort; but too often "the clouds returned after the rain," the temptations and the grief came back again, and the work was once more all to do. Meantime, the weak body languished and lost day by day, and it seemed likely enough that Winifred would fade away and drop into the earth with the fading flowers of autumn. But her work was not yet done, and she could not go home till it was finished.

One day she was leaning back listlessly enough in the chair which Ashwell had drawn to the window, that Winifred might look down on the still gay garden and away to the hills beyond the city. She had wearied herself in the attempt to set right the piece of work which the twins in a fit of desperation had brought to show her, and had not half finished, when Ashwell came in, scolded them

both well, and sent the girls down, Phyllis crying and Jemima in a fit of sulks, to get out of their difficulty as best they could. Winifred felt tired, disappointed, and utterly discouraged; and as soon as Ashwell had left her, she leaned back in her chair, and gave way to a fit of weeping as childish as that of poor Phyllis.

The tears at least did her some good, for she sobbed herself to sleep, and awaked somewhat refreshed and strengthened, and really feeling a little wonder as to what time it was and whether Ashwell would be coming presently with her dinner. She had been dreaming of old times at the Hall —of walking with my lady and working with Mrs. Alwright. The dream was very clear and distinct; she almost felt as though Lady Peckham's inquiry was still ringing in her ear: "And where is my little Winifred?" There seemed a good deal of bustle in the house which she could not understand —and then, why did not Ashwell come?

The door opened. It was not Ashwell with the tray, however, but Paulina, with a little flush of color in her cheeks, and a certain excitement in her manner. She came to Winifred's chair and kissed her.

"Do you feel better? I peeped in a few moments

ago, and you were fast asleep in your chair, with the tears on your cheeks! What had you been crying for, you naughty child? Like Phyllis, because Ashwell scolded you?"

"I hardly know myself," returned Winifred, winking away the tears which would stay very near her eyes. "I felt sorry for the poor girls, and vexed at myself for being so easily tired. But, Paulina, if they will bring up their frames now, I will try to show them."

"You are to do no such thing," said Paulina, positively. "The frames can wait, and I have something else to set you upon just now besides tapestry work."

"Why, Paulina, what has come over you?" said Winifred, rousing herself and looking at the girl with attention. "You look as though you had been hearing some great piece of good news!"

"Suppose I have—do you want to hear it?"

Winifred's heart began to beat fast, and she looked at Paulina without speaking.

"Suppose now I could bring the person in all the world you most wanted to see,—whom should it be?" asked Paulina.

Winifred flushed scarlet all at once, for the name which came to her lips was that of Arthur Carew

Then, as her dream came across her mind, she exclaimed, "Paulina, tell me! Have you news of my lady?" Then as Paulina nodded mischievously, with her eyes full of smiles and her mouth demurely pursed up: "Paulina, tell me! Don't tease me, please!"

"It shall not be teased, then," said Paulina. "It shall be made to look pretty, and neat, and have on its new cap, and then it shall see what it shall see."

"No, no, Paulina!" said a voice at the half-opened door. "You shall not keep us waiting any longer. Winifred, my dear, my darling child!"

It was the voice of her dream. Winifred stretched out her arms with a cry like that of a child which sees its mother. She saw the well-known face, looking more delicate than ever under the close widow's coif and veil, caught a glimpse of Alwright's tall, spare form behind her mistress, heard a little cry of alarm from Paulina, and that was the last she knew, till she found herself lying on the bed, with Mrs. Alwright bathing her face, and Lady Peckham and Paulina watching her.

I shall not attempt to describe the meeting between Winifred and her oldest friend, nor the raptures of Alwright over her former pupil. At

last Lady Peckham yielded to her cousin's hospitable entreaties, and descended to partake of the feast Lady Corbet had prepared for her, and Winifred was left in charge of Alwright, who insisted upon cutting her dinner, and would gladly have been allowed to put it into her mouth.

"No, indeed, dear Alwright, I can feed myself very well," said Winifred. "I feel better than for a long time past, though I was so silly as to faint Sit you there where I can look at you, and tell me all the news. I see my lady is a widow! When did Sir Edward die?"

"At Rome, whither we went in the train of my Lord Castlewaine the ambassador—and pretty company *he* was!" said Alwright, in disgust. "You know, my dear, between ourselves, Sir Edward was always inclined to side with whichever party was uppermost. So, after we went to London and to court, he began to look the way the king's party did—toward Rome, you know. He did not really go over, and perhaps he never meant to do so, but he read their books, and went to the chapel, and all that. So, when this embassy was sent out, Sir Edward must needs go along. It was a grief to my lady, though he made her health one reason for

the journey, but you know she never opposed her husband."

"Perhaps his majesty thought the journey to Rome would finish Sir Edward's conversion," said Winifred.

"And so it did, indeed, my dear, but it was the wrong way. Sir Edward saw and heard so many things that no true English gentleman could swallow, that he became disgusted with the whole concern. Then he took one of the fevers they have there, and died in a few days. The priests came about him, and would have it that he died in the Church of Rome, but it was no such thing. And then, my lady was very ill and feeble for a long time after, so we could not leave when my Lord Castlewaine did—more by token, they say the pope never showed him the least bit of favor, after all. I must say, some of the foreign papists were very good to us—I shall always remember it of them, I am sure—but oh, Winifred, if you could only see the cooking, and the smells, and the old women! Well, my lady got better, at last, and then we came home as quickly as we could."

"I tried every way to hear from you," said Winifred, "but I could not learn where Sir Edward had gone. When I first came here, I heard that

Lady Corbet was cousin to my lady, and hoped to get news from her; but she could only tell me that my Lord Carew was dead, and my lady, she thought, was still abroad."

"Yes, the poor gentleman is dead at last, and a good thing, too, for himself and everybody Master Arthur is Lord Carew now. Much good it does him, since he cannot come home to enjoy it!"

"And where is Master Arthur—I mean, my lord?" asked Winifred, suddenly very busy with her boiled chicken.

"He has been all this time in far-away parts, fighting the Turks, that they say the King of France has brought upon Christendom again. But now he hath returned to Holland, and is in the service of the Prince and Princess of Orange, God bless them!"

"But how did you find me out, and why did my lady never answer the letter I sent her by Joseph the groom, after my mother died? Oh, Mrs. Alwright, if you knew how I wearied for an answer to that letter!"

"Aye, aye, poor maid!" said Alwright, sympathetically. "I can guess well. 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' But the letter never

reached my lady. Joseph did not get to London till after we had set out for Rome. As soon as we came back to the Hall, my lady's first inquiry was for you, and sadly disappointed we were to learn that the family was broken up, and you were gone no one knew where."

"Your brother knew, and Dame Oldmixon."

"Yes, but neither of them were at Holford. A gentleman my brother knew at college has given him a fine living away off in the North, somewhere about Durham. And Dame Oldmixon has gone to live with some of her kin. So we could find out nothing from them. Then my lady left the Hall for good, and we went to Exeter, where we have—I mean, my lady has a fine old house, as good as this. And the heir has new furnished the Hall, and given my lady a deal of the old furniture, so you will see the place looking very natural, though, to be sure, we have not the Hall garden to walk in."

"But how did you find me out at last?"

"Oh, my lady was wanted at the Hall on some business. I must say the new family are very civil, and treated her as though she were the head of the house still. So we went out to visit all the old places, and among the rest the Stonehill farm.

And there we found your uncle and aunt—a stirring, notable dame she seems, but no more like your dear mother than a houseleek is like a bunch of violets. She told us that you had gone to live as governess to my Lady Corbet's daughters, and had staid behind to nurse them in the fever; but she did not know whether you were dead or alive. So then my lady said, 'Alwright, I am going to Bristol to seek out my cousin Judith.' For you see, there had been no intercourse between them for ever so long, my old lady having been bitterly opposed to Mrs. Judith marrying young Corbet, though he has turned out enough better than that poor silly Mr. Hervey. 'I am sure she will give us a welcome for the sake of old times,' said my lady; 'and perhaps I may find Winifred still with her.' And so she did! She had always a warm heart, had Mrs. Judith, and I for one never blamed her for marrying the man to whom her parents betrothed her. So she welcomed us as if we had been princesses of the blood, and could not say enough in your praise for all you did, which I was not at all surprised at, for you were ever a good girl, my dear, and had the best of teaching, though I say it that should not, perhaps."

"She is an excellent lady," said Winifred,

warmly. "An own father and mother could not have been kinder than she and Sir John have been to me since I have been ill."

"And so she ought!" said Alwright, rather indignantly. "I wonder what she would have done without you. But she is a good woman, that I do not deny, and seems to have brought up her daughters well."

"That she has, and they are all sweet girls. I long for the time when I shall be able to teach them again."

"Then you may leave off longing, for you are not going to do any such thing!" answered Alwright, sharply. "You are to go home with us to Exeter, and be brought up as my lady's own daughter henceforth! She told me so herself. 'If I find Winifred at all what I expect'– those were her very words—'I shall take her home and treat her as my own child.' And I am sure she will not be disappointed in you, for seeing that you are so thin and pale, you are prettier than ever, and more like poor Captain Winthrop, your cousin. So don't be thinking or talking of teaching any more, sweetheart, but get well as fast as you can, and be ready to return home with us And I

must learn to call you Mrs. Winifred, now that you are to be a great lady!"

"You shall never call me anything but your own Winnie, dear Alwright! And so my lady does not live at the Hall any more?"

"No; in her house at Exeter, as I told you And she hath a good jointure and money from her father's estate besides. So we have such an establishment as becomes a lady of her quality, though we see little company, my lady being so lately a widow. But now, my dear, you must not speak a word more, but lie and rest against my lady comes up."

Winifred did not wish to talk She was quite content to lie still and enjoy the sober certainty of waking bliss. "To live with my lady all the rest of her life—to read to her and wait upon her—was it possible that, after all her past trials, such a future could be in store for her? How unthankful, how distrustful she had lately been, and all this time God had this blessing in store for her! This very morning she had been feeling as if He had forgotten her! Most earnest was her prayer for forgiveness, her thanksgiving for the unexpected and undeserved blessing. She fell asleep with the words of prayer in her heart and on her

lips, and awoke to find the dear face bending over her, the dear hand once more clasped in hers.

From that time Winifred improved rapidly, gaining flesh and strength from day to day, until she was able to go first into the school-room for a change, and then out into the garden. It was quite settled now that Winifred was to return home with Lady Peckham as soon as the doctor should pronounce her strong enough to bear the journey, and was to be considered henceforth as her ladyship's adopted child.

"I am sure I don't know what in the world I shall do without you, dear!" said good Lady Corbet. "You have been everything to us during this disastrous time of sickness and poor Paulina's trouble, and I shall always say that it was a blessed day for us all when I met you at Mrs. Bowler's. At the same time, I don't deny that my kinswoman hath the best right to you, and perhaps needs you more than I, in respect she hath no daughters to keep her company in her widow's household. And though daughters are a care, doubtless, and an anxiety, yet it cannot be denied that they are a great comfort. I am sure Sir John would have always given you a home as long as you needed it and would have provided a marriage portion for

you the same as for his own girls, and no doubt my lady will do the same when you come to leave her, as of course you will do some day, sweetheart, for such maids as you do not go begging."

"I shall never leave my lady," said Winifred, hastily, and vexed to feel her cheeks growing scarlet.

"Aye, aye, that is what they all say," said Lady Corbet, smiling. "'I shall never leave you, mother,' says Pall. Poor Pall, I do not know what she, of all others, will do without you."

Winifred echoed her good friend's sigh. She felt herself drawn two ways, and while she, like the rest, took it for granted that she was to go with Lady Peckham, she could not help feeling many regrets for those she was leaving behind.

The next day Lady Corbet came up again, full of smiles and significant looks.

"Aha, madam, did I not say our Winifred was not one to go begging?" said she, addressing herself to Lady Peckham, who was amusing her young cousins with some stories of her experience abroad, while Mrs. Alwright looked over and rectified the much abused tapestry-work. Then recollecting herself, she assumed an air of becoming importance,

as she beckoned Lady Peckham into the next room.

"I wonder what my mother means?" said the literal Jemima, as the door closed. "Why should Mrs. Winifred go begging?"

"She does not really mean begging,' said Phyllis, laughing. "I know what it is! Somebody has been proposing for Winifred, and I guess who it is, too! It is Mr. Gunnison."

"Mr. Gunnison!" said Jemima, slowly. "Why, he is married. I saw his wife's name in the cathedral. 'Here lies Mary, beloved wife of James Gunnison, aged twenty-six!'"

"But she is dead, you goose! Don't you know that when you read her name on the tomb yourself? How should she be in the cathedral vault, else?"

"Oh, I do hope it is Mr. Gunnison, because then Winifred will live in the Close and we can see her every day.

"Hush, hush!" said Alwright, who had established herself in the school-room, where she reigned supreme over needles and frames, to the great disgust of old Ashwell. "Young ladies should never talk of being married, or guess what their elders mean! Now, take your frames, be good

maids, and sit up straight at your work, and I will tell you how my lady and I went to visit the convent at Rome."

Phyllis was right in guessing that her mother's words related to a matrimonial proposition for Winifred, though she was mistaken in the person. Doctor Mercer had admired Winifred from the first of their acquaintance. They were naturally thrown much together during the continuance of the fever, and afterwards, in Winifred's own sick-room ; and the more he knew her, the more he saw to admire. Doctor Mercer, blunt and odd as it pleased him at times to appear, was a gentleman, and a man of strong and warm feelings. He had known little of women, having always been devoted to science and to his profession, and had been in the habit of looking upon them with a kind of indulgent contempt, as poor weak creatures, who must be borne with and taken care of because they *were* weak, and because they were necessary to the well-being and continuance of the race. But in Winifred he had met with a woman who had commanded first his admiration, and then his respect and love, by her quiet courage, her docility and good sense, and her straightforward truthfulness. The end of the matter was that the grave, middle-aged doctor had

fallen in love with the girl of eighteen; and this very morning he had, after the fashion considered lecorous at the time, made proposals to Lady Corbet, as being her present guardian, for the hand of Winifred Evans, and she in her turn had propounded the matter to Lady Peckham.

"You see, cousin, it may be or might have been considered a fine match for our Winifred. Doctor Mercer is no common apothecary, but a physician, besides that he is a gentleman of a good old family, and hath a moderate fortune of his own besides his profession. He is a man of high character, and a good Christian. I am sure his prayers and his exhortations, when my poor children were ill, were as good as a clergyman's, and so said Mr. Gunnison himself. To be sure, he is a thought elderly for Winifred, but then she is grave beyond her years."

"And what does Winifred think of the matter?" asked Lady Peckham, as soon as she could get in a word. "Does she like this Doctor Mercer?"

"She always speaks well of him, and talks and laughs with him when he comes to see her, especially since she has been so much better. More than that I cannot say. But no doubt she will be guided by you in the matter. I told Doctor Mer-

cer, 'My cousin Margaret has taken the gentlewoman under her own charge,' said I; 'and she is the person to be consulted, but doubtless Winifred will be governed by her will, as is becoming.'"

"It all depends upon Winifred's own feelings," said Lady Peckham, smiling and sighing. "I am not one of those who believe in forcing the inclinations of young people, however great may be the worldly advantages promised."

"Nor I," said Lady Corbet. "You know how I stood out against my old lady, your honored mother, who, with all due respect to her and you, did a deal more of that sort of thing than ever came to good. But then Winifred may like him, you know. It is nothing very strange for a girl to fancy a man old enough to be her father."

"True, especially if he is presented to her in the light of a hero," observed Lady Peckham.

"And you know it *would* be a good match," continued Lady Corbet. "Sir John has put by the money for Winifred's portion the same as for his own girls, and you and I could give her an outfit suitable for any lady in the land," continued the good lady, who was evidently gratified at the prospect of a wedding. "Doctor Mercer has established himself permanently in Bristol, and is

coming into good practice. It would be hard for you, that is true," she concluded, struck all at once by the idea that there was another side to the matter, "to lose Winifred, just as you have found her again."

"I should not let that consideration stand in the way, if Winifred were disposed to the match," said Lady Peckham. "Girls always do marry some time or other—at least, such girls as Winifred—and it is of no use to calculate upon anything else. It would be gross selfishness in me to allow myself to be influenced by any such thing as that. I suppose, Cousin Judith, the best way will be for me to sound Winifred upon the matter, and see what her feelings are. Or will you undertake the office yourself?"

"Dear heart, no! I have no sense at all about managing any such matter. I should say and do just exactly the wrong thing. I never knew any other way of going to work than just speaking right out."

"I think that is usually the best way of going to work," said Lady Peckham, smiling. "It was always your way, Judith. I remember my father used to call you 'Down-right Dunstable!' However, I will talk to Winifred about the matter, and

put the good doctor out of suspense as quickly as possible."

Winifred received the doctor's proposal at first with simple incredulity, then with some degree of indignation, and at last she burst into tears and sobbed hysterically.

"Why, Winifred, my child, what is all this for?" said Lady Peckham. "I cannot for my life see anything in the matter calling for such floods of tears! Come, come, be a woman, and tell me what to say to the good man!"

The old tone of gentle command had not lost its effect over Winifred. She checked herself by degrees, and presently was calm enough to say:

"I am sure he is very good—and does me great honor—but oh, my lady, I cannot think of it! I cannot, indeed! I wish to do my duty, but"——

There seemed imminent danger of another flood of tears, as Winifred ceased speaking, and busied herself with the fringe of her tippet.

"It is not necessarily your duty to marry a man because he asks you," said Lady Peckham, smiling. "But, Winifred, I would have you consider seriously before you reject this offer. It is a very advantageous one, in every respect."

"I know it, my lady, and far above my deserts.; but"——

"You have seen a great deal of Doctor Mercer, and that is a way to become well acquainted with him," pursued her friend. "What is there about him that you do not like?"

"Nothing, my lady! He is one of the best men I ever knew! To be sure, I have not known many."

"He has a good estate besides his practice, and his family is, to say the least, equal to your own."

"Superior, my lady! I have not forgotten that I am but the daughter of a merchant captain, and the granddaughter of a Somersetshire yeoman," said Winifred, not without a touch of pride. "I trust not to forget my station."

"Your mother belonged to one of our oldest Devonshire families," said Lady Peckham. "I do not think there is any disparity upon that score. Sir John Corbet claims the pleasure of paying your marriage portion, and my good cousin Judith and myself will see that you have everything becoming your position. Think of it, Winifred! Such an opportunity of establishing yourself will not come every day. Think well before you decide!"

To judge from her face, Winifred did not seem to be thinking favorably. Her friend watched her

with something like a smile lurking in her eyes and the corners of her mouth, as Winifred sat very erect, looking down at the sprigs of rosemary which she was pulling to pieces for Alwright to distil, and upon which she was bestowing a good deal more strength than was necessary.

"Well, my child," said she, at last, "you must not keep the good man in doubt longer than you can help. What shall I say to him?"

"I cannot marry him, my lady!" Winifred's voice was husky, but firm, and her face had regained its calmness. "He is very good—too good for me, but I cannot be his wife. It would not be right! I am sure it would not! Oh, my dear lady, do not be angry with me, but indeed, indeed I cannot marry Doctor Mercer!"

"My dear child, I have no right or cause to be angry, since the doctor's loss is my gain. I have no mind to part with you, Winifred, though I could of course do so, if it seemed best for you. You are still young, and your health is not yet firmly established—though, as my cousin Judith would say, that is the more reason for your marrying a doctor."

"Please, my lady!"

"I suppose I ought to go over with all the stock

phrases and questions," continued Lady Peckham, smiling rather sadly. "I ought to preach to you the duty of submission to your elders, to lecture you upon your presumption, and to question you as to whether you have any other attachment which prevents you from accepting so good an offer. Why, my child, if you color so, I shall think there is some occasion for the question!"

Winifred's face was indeed scarlet with the provoking color which *would* rush into her cheeks at the wrong time.

"What dream are you cherishing, little one?" asked her friend, tenderly drawing the blushing face and tearful eyes to hide themselves on her shoulder. "You have, perhaps, seen some one who more nearly approaches your notions of a hero than even your kind and courageous doctor! You have no engagement, have you, Winifred?"

"No, my lady."

"Well, my child, I do not want to pry into your secrets, if you have them."

"Indeed, my lady, I have none," said Winifred, lifting her head, but letting it fall once more as she met Lady Peckham's motherly and penetrating gaze. "Oh, madam, do not be angry with me!"

"Why should I be angry, Winifred?' asked

Lady Peckham, gravely. "Do you know of aught that should displease me?"

"No, madam," said Winifred, recovering her calmness, and meeting her friend's gaze. "I have nothing in my mind of which to be ashamed before you or before God. It is true that I have had an attachment to one whom I have not seen for some years, and shall probably never meet again; but that is all. I shall never be married, nor have I any wish to be so. I have no other desire than to live with you and wait upon you, or, if that may not be, to go on earning my bread as I have done. Marry Doctor Mercer, I cannot! I am deeply sorry to seem so ungrateful for all his kindness, but the thing is impossible. I would rather work in Lady Corbet's kitchen, or even scrub my aunt's floors and trenchers all my life long!"

"Well, sweetheart, that is not the alternative," said Lady Peckham, kissing her. "I shall acquaint my cousin with your decision and leave her to inform the doctor. But, Winifred, my dear child, beware of making an idol, even of your cross! Believe me, it is easy to do so. Do not let your thoughts dwell or your fancies wander in a world of your own making, lest in doing your own works you cease from God's, and thus lose your portion

in the rest which remaineth for His people. Now lie down and repose yourself, and try to gain strength, for I wish to return home as soon as possible. I hope to find letters from my brother awaiting me."

Lady Peckham was helping to loosen Winifred's dress as she spoke, and she felt the start and quiver, at the same time that she caught a glimpse of an enamelled chain and locket which she well knew.

"And is it even so!" she thought, as she descended the stairs. "Has the poor little thing been cherishing the memory and image of my wild Arthur all these weary years? I remember now how shy she has seemed of asking or speaking about him! Well, well! Such constancy deserves its reward, but I fear for her, especially if Arthur should return. However, there is no help for it now. She would make a lovely little baroness, that is certain, and her birth and breeding are better than those of the London heiress my poor mother destined for her elder son. But what an old fool I am! Arthur has doubtless fallen in love with a dozen ladies of quality since he hath seen Winifred!"

Lady Corbet could not help showing her disappointment at the rejection of Doctor Mercer, and

would have plied Winifred with various arguments in his favor, had not her cousin persuaded her that to agitate Winifred in her present weak state would be to endanger a relapse which would infallibly kill the patient.

"Well, I dare say you are right, Cousin Margaret! You always are, and if Winifred cannot like him, she cannot; and that is all about it. But to see the luck some girls have! I could almost have wished the offer had fallen to my Pall, who, poor child, can hardly hope for any great match after all that has happened. Not that I should care so much for that, if I could only see her hold up her head once more."

"I have observed that my young cousin seemed to have a cloud hanging over her," said Lady Peckham, not unwilling to divert Lady Corbet's attention from Winifred. "She appears like one who has some heavy trouble upon her mind."

The good mother was easily won to tell the story, and her cousin listened with real sympathy and kindness.

"And, now you see all this puts my poor girl in a sad position!" concluded Lady Corbet. "Her father is displeased, and with good reason, and people about town make the tale a deal worse

than it really is. It is bad enough, no doubt, and would have been worse, but for Winifred and the good doctor; but yet it seems hard that the poor maid's life should be thus overclouded. My old Lady Germaine, who has always been my great friend and adviser, cannot help me here, in respect she is herself a papist—more's the pity! and what to do I cannot tell."

"You do not think Paulina has any present inclination to the Church of Rome?" asked her cousin.

"Bless your heart, no! I am rather afraid of her going to the other extreme. I found her only yesterday reading the strangest book! It is called the "Pilgrim's Progress," and Mr. Gunnison says it was written by a Baptist tinker. I must say it read like a fairy tale, and though I am no great reader, I could hardly lay it down. But surely such a book cannot be fit for a young lady!"

"I believe there is no harm in the book, cousin," said Lady Peckham. "Winifred read it aloud to tc me some three years ago. It appeared to me to be a remarkable book to come from such a source, and to contain a great deal of truth."

"Well, I dare say you are right! I would as soon have your notion of a book as the bishop's.

But I wish you would give me your best advice, for I am at my wits' end and that is the truth!"

"Suppose you let my young cousin go home with me for a while," said Lady Peckham, after a little consideration. "My household will be but a dull one for a young lady, but Paulina will have Winifred for a companion, and as you say she has not yet finished her studies, she can perfect herself in work and housewifery under my good Alwright, and I will myself instruct both her and Winifred in what accomplishments I possess."

Lady Corbet joyfully accepted the offer, and proceeded to acquaint her daughter with it. Paulina was equally pleased. She liked the prospect of having a change and seeing something new, and she was overjoyed at leaving Bristol, where, she fancied, every one stared and pointed at her. Winifred was delighted not to be separated from Paulina, to whom she was greatly attached, and, in fine, every one was pleased except poor Doctor Mercer and the twins. The latter were indeed inconsolable at the thought of losing Winifred and Paulina both at once, and were hardly to be comforted by the promise that they should also go to visit Cousin Margaret in her new home.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PRINCE.

GOOD evening to you, madam! So you have absolutely condescended, for as great lady as you are, to come and visit the house of your father's own brother! That is more than I expected. Girl, this is my lady's adopted daughter, a lady of quality. Why do you not make your reverences at once, and acknowledge the honor she does us!"

Such was the affectionate greeting which Dame Evans bestowed on her husband's niece, who had hastened to come and see her as soon as she heard through a neighbor of their return to Bristol. In truth, the poor woman's narrow soul was boiling over with envy and spite at her niece's change of fortune. She was one of those unlucky people who regard every piece of preferment falling to any one else as just so much taken from themselves.

Simon Evans had given his full and free consent when Lady Peckham had informed him, on occasion of her visit to Holford, of her intentions with regard to Winifred; adding that Winifred was half a lady by birth, and wholly so in her bringing up; and much better suited to be a companion to Lady Peckham than a household help to such as they were.

"I trust Winifred has not failed in her duty to you or to her aunt," said Lady Peckham.

"By no means, my lady! She has been everything that she should be, and more!"

"I don't know what you mean by that," grumbled Dame Evans, by no means pleased with this unqualified praise of Winifred. "I am sure, the pains I had to wean her from her books and her dreaming, and make her do anything useful! And now to have her snatched away, and by a stranger, as it were! I must say, 'tis very hard!"

Master Evans gave his wife a glance that she well understood as a signal to hold her tongue. "If the girl is alive, as I trust she may be, your ladyship is heartily welcome to her, and I hope she may repay your kindness towards her," continued her uncle. "'Tis not every great lady to whom I would trust her in these times, but you, my lady,

and Sir Edward, are well known as being no favorers of court follies and sins."

So the matter was settled, to the great chagrin of Margery Evans, who would have liked at least to throw some difficulties in the way. But even this was not the worst. Simon Evans had been much surprised at the circumstance that his father had died without making a will. It was very unlike his ordinary business-like habits, which caused him to make a matter of conscience of doing everything in the right time and way. Magdalen Evans had always been a great favorite with her father, and with good reason; for ever since her marriage she had kept his house, looked after his interests, and waited upon him with more than the devotion of a daughter; and never by word or sign had she shown any consciousness of superiority to the family of the yeoman. Under these circumstances it seemed incredible to Simon Evans that his father should have left Magdalen and her child unprovided for; especially as his brother Gilbert was in the habit of putting his wages into his father's hands to be invested for the benefit of his family. No will, however, had been found, and Simon, an honest and upright though rather thick-headed man, had ever since been casting

about in his mind for the best way to set right the injustice his father had committed.

No sooner had the Evans family arrived at the farm, than Dame Margery began the necessary process of cleaning the long shut up house; and great was the rummaging and wonderful the objurgations bestowed upon the dirty sluts of maids, and the carelessness and neglect of poor sister Magdalen, who, it was plain to be seen, had never given the place a thorough cleaning since she went into it. It was well for Winifred's peace of mind that she was not present to hear the remarks made upon her mother's management.

One day she attacked old Master Evans' room, and turned all the furniture out of doors, that she might, as she said, have the place to herself. Out went the ancient chair and table, the heavy bedstead was denuded of its hangings and dragged out into the middle of the floor, and Dame Margery called upon her husband to come and help move out the heavy old secretary and chest of drawers, in which Master Evans had always kept his papers and other more valuable possessions. Simon had looked through this secretary more than once without finding what he sought. Now, however, as he drew the end away from the wall, he perceived a

paper sticking out through a crevice at the back. With some difficulty he pulled it out, and unfolded it, and a moment's glance showed him it was the will he had sought.

"Well, what now?" said his wife, sharply. "What is in that paper, that you stare at it like an owl at a mouse?"

"I believe, Margery," said Simon, slowly, "that I have found my father's will."

"And what if you have? What difference will that make?"

"It may make a great deal of difference!" said Simon. "I must find some one who can make me understand this paper. I am sorry that my good lady is gone from the Hall. I believe I will go to the vicar."

"Better keep it to yourself, good man," suggested Margery, somewhat alarmed. "What does it signify? You are the eldest son, and have the best right to your father's property, and Winifred is provided for. Better let well alone"

"Woman!" said Simon Evans, sternly, "wouldst thou have me build up my house by wrong and robbery, and thus bring upon these young ones the curse of ill-gotten gain? I have ever thought it strange that my father left nothing to my brother

Gilbert's family. I doubt not this will set the matter right."

So it proved. The new vicar examined the will, and read it to Simon Evans. By this instrument he discovered that his father had put no less than six hundred pounds into the hands of Sir Edward Peckham, to be invested for the benefit of Magdalen Evans and her children. A great part of this sum, it was stated, consisted of the earnings of Gilbert Evans, and the result of some fortunate speculations in the china jars and Indian brocades and cottons which were just becoming fashionable. In addition, Winifred was to have for life the rents of certain tenements in the village of Holford. Vouchers and all other papers relating to the transaction would be found in the secret drawer where the will was deposited. The clue being given, it was not difficult to discover the drawer, in which were all the documents, arranged in perfect order. Sir Edward's former lawyer had died of the fever, but his son and successor at Bridgewater easily discovered among Sir Edward's papers additional evidence of the transaction; and as the baronet was perfectly methodical in all business affairs, and left abundance of ready money for the discharge of

all debts, there seemed no doubt that Winifred's portion would be immediately forthcoming.

It would be more easy to imagine than to describe the wrath of Dame Margery Evans at this discovery. In vain did her husband represent to her that the money in question had belonged to Winifred's father, and not to his own, and was therefore no concern of his. In vain did he tell her that, as they had never known of the existence of this six hundred pounds, they were no poorer without them. Dame Margery persisted in considering it as just so much bread taken out of the mouths of her own children. She lamented and scolded day and night, till her husband, worn out, assumed his rare tone of authority, and bade her never mention the subject in his hearing again, under pain of certain penalties not unusual in those days. It may be believed that Margery's gall was none the less bitter for this enforced suppression. She had come back to Bristol, determined, as she said, to see Winifred, and give her a piece of her mind; and the opportunity had come sooner than she expected. Winifred's affectionate anxiety to meet and greet her relatives had, so to speak, led her directly into the lion's jaws. She had as yet heard nothing of her good fortune,

Lady Peckham having thought it better that the matter should be settled entirely before it was spoken of; and she stood perfectly aghast at the reception she met with. Dame Margery perceived her confusion, and followed up her advantage with a torrent of abuse of Winifred herself, and all her friends, including her mother, Lady Peckham, and the whole Corbet family. There was no telling how far she might have gone, if Betsey, becoming alarmed at her mother's violence, had not run down to the water-side and called her father. The presence of Master Evans at once restored quiet. Margery's storm of words subsided into a low mutter, and presently dissolved into a shower of tears, in which she bewailed her unhappy fate in meeting with such black ingratitude from those she had nourished as her own, alluded to frozen vipers which stung those who warmed them, and finally, having fairly worn out her fit of temper, was ready to meet Winifred with a sort of mournful solemnity, when she came down-stairs from packing up such of her possessions as remained at her aunt's, and dividing between the little girls the presents she had brought them: to hope that her sins would not be visited on her head, and that she would not come to shame and destruction among

the fine folks who had taken her up, now that it was known she had a little money of her own.

"You forget, dame," said her husband, "that my lady has known Winifred longer than we have, and that Sir John's family took her up because she was useful to them in teaching the young ladies."

But Dame Evans did not choose to remember. Winifred had chosen her lot, and she must abide by it, she said. She washed her hands of the whole matter. Thank goodness, she had no reason to be running after gentlefolks. She had kept her own house over her head and the heads of her family —much thanks she got for it—and she hoped to do so, though the bread *had* been taken out of the mouths of her children to enrich strangers. And here, the temper coming uppermost once more, she fell into a regular screaming and kicking fit of hysterics.

"Go, Winifred, you can do no good here," said her uncle. "May God bless you, child! I trust nd will believe you are provided for, but if ever you are in need, remember my house is always open to you. Give my grateful duty to my lady, and as you go by the goldsmith's send in Dame Joyce to see to your aunt. She is a good-natured woman, and knows how to manage her."

Winifred never saw her aunt again. The dame died not very long after from a cold taken in scrubbing the bricks of the little court one cold day, while she was wet through and through from washing of windows. After waiting a decent time, Simon Evans took to wife a younger sister of Dame Joyce, who had been well educated in one of the excellent foundation schools of Bristol. With all the kindness of heart and cheerfulness of spirit of her elder sister, she possessed more sense and steadiness of purpose. She proved a real blessing to the household of Simon Evans, and was more truly a mother to his daughters than ever their own had been. Simon Evans grew rich and prospered, and, feeling a certain longing after his old home, he sold out his business, and retired with his family to the Stonehill farm, where he and his wife lived and died in peace, respected by all who knew them.

In the course of a week Lady Peckham returned to her house at Exeter, taking Paulina and Winifred, and the two girls were soon settled into a regular course of study and work, under the direction of Lady Peckham and the vigorous supervision of Mrs. Alwright. Relieved from the annoyance of curious and reproachful eyes, and influenced by

the calm and cheerful spirit of her cousin, Paulina rapidly regained health and spirits. She took a new interest in the accomplishments she had heretofore despised, when shown that they, like all other advantages, were talents committed to her charge to be used for the glory of God and the good of those about her. She threw herself into study and work with an energy which nobody had believed was in her, and daily surprised her kind teacher by her progress, and astonished Alwright by her skill in inventing new patterns and improving old ones, and by baking a saffron cake and an almond pastry as well as her teacher or Winifred.

To Winifred all seemed more like a happy dream than like any possible reality; and she almost feared to wake and find herself again scouring trenchers or washing casements under the supervision of Dame Margery. Not that even now she was perfectly happy. She could not but regret the terms on which she had parted with her aunt, though her own reason told her she was not in fault; and she was conscious of a sharp pang of pain and regret whenever anything was said about Arthur Carew. Lady Peckham seldom mentioned her brother, though Winifred believed that she often heard from him. She only knew that he

was in Holland, and, openly or covertly, in the service of the Prince of Orange, and that if the now much talked of expedition of the prince should take place, Arthur Carew would doubtless accompany him. But suppose she should ever see him again, what good would that do her? Was it at all likely that after so long a time he would remember the little country girl to whom he had given the locket and said those words under the great pear-tree? Had those words ever been anything more than the empty compliments of a courtier? Or, if he had been sincere at the time, would not Lord Carew be a very different person from the wounded and half-starved adventurer whom she had guided to Dame Sprat's cottage on that memorable midnight? And what would my lady say to such a match?

But with all these questionings and a hundred more, Winifred's faith did not fail. She knew that her fate was in better hands than those of any earthly friend, however kind and wise, and that all would be ordered for the best. So she took up her cross bravely, and bore it silently, as many a woman has done both before and since; never allowing her thoughts to dwell upon her trouble more than she could help, and thankful that she

had at least one Friend to whom she could pour out her heart, and whom she could ask for blessings upon all those dearest to her. Meantime she gave her whole mind and attention to the studies she was pursuing with Paulina, under Lady Peckham's direction, went to prayers at the grand old cathedral on Sundays and holidays, worked for the poor, and was introduced to Lady Peckham's visitors as "Mrs. Evans, a young kinswoman whom I have taken to bring up." Thus the little household in the fine old house at Exeter pursued its quiet way amid all the disturbances of the time, seeing little company and hearing little news; though Winifred shrewdly suspected that her lady knew more of what went on in the great world outside than she always saw fit to communicate.

One afternoon in November, Lady Peckham sat in the bow-windowed parlor, looking into the garden with her two young friends, busied with her knitting, while Paulina and Winifred read aloud in turn. Either the chronicler was not very entertaining or the readers were preoccupied, for Lady Peckham often let her knitting fall as she looked absently into the garden, Paulina seemed in imminent danger of going to sleep over her frame, and Winifred more than once lost her place, when they

were suddenly startled and effectually aroused by the entrance of Mrs. Alwright, in a state of perturbation and alarm most unusual in that staid and discreet spinster.

"O madam! O my lady! John Footman has just come home, and he says there is certain news come that the Prince of Orange has landed at Torbay with all his army, and is marching direct upon Exeter by this very road. What shall we do? What will become of us?"

The whole party started, and Winifred turned pale as death. She well remembered the undisciplined rabble of Monmouth's army and the horrors which followed its defeat. Lady Peckham seemed the least disturbed of the three.

"I do not think there is any cause for present alarm," said she. "Yes, my poor Winifred, I see well of what you are thinking, but I believe this will be a very different matter from that wretched affair of the Duke of Monmouth. The Prince of Orange is a worthy Christian gentleman, and his wife the next heir to the throne. I have reason to know that he has been invited over at this time by some of the foremost men in the kingdom. His troops are famous for their discipline and good

order, and he has with him many English gentlemen."

"Then your ladyship does not think we had better begin to pack up our goods?" said Alwright.

"On the contrary, I think you had better prepare for the reception of guests—especially of some one who loves sweet sausages and saffron cakes—for I am mistaken if we do not have a visitor before long!"

The next few days were days of great excitement to all the people of Exeter, and our friends had their full share of interest in what was going on. Some of the cathedral authorities, as soon as they heard of the landing of the troops at Torbay, left their posts and went up to London. The magistrates who favored King James remained in their places; but they could do nothing against the universal feeling of the inhabitants, and, wisely enough probably, did not try. All sorts of rumors were afloat about the men the prince had brought with him. It was said that they were a race of giants; that they carried such arms and accoutrements as had never been seen before; that some of them were savages from the far north where the sun never shone and the ocean was frozen solid. The people of Exeter, whose notions of armies

were taken from the lawless rabble of Monmouth or the more highly organized rapacity and ruffianism of Kirke's band, began to anticipate with terror the entrance of the troops into the city. But all the rumors which came from the now rapidly advancing army concurred in saying that the soldiers were under the strictest discipline, took nothing without paying for it, and were civil to all who came in their way.

"Only think, madam," said a young servant one morning, "they say the prince has two or three hundred blackamoors with him—real blackamoors from the Indies!"

"Well," said Lady Peckham, not at all discomposed by the news, "I dare say they are harmless enough."

"I cannot help liking blackamoors!" said Paulina. "Poor Jack, my father's black, was so good when we were all ill!"

"They are good and bad, like other people, I suppose!" said Lady Peckham. "I do not think you have any cause for fear, Dolly. Only attend to your work, and all will go well enough."

"Poor Dolly!" said Winifred, laughing, as the girl retreated. "She seems rather disappointed 'at her story has made no more stir.'

"Yes, people of her sort have a great fondness for horrors. But I do not think there is any cause for alarm. The prince himself, I am well advised, will be here to-morrow or the next day, and no disorder is likely to go on in his neighborhood!"

The next day but one all Exeter was in the street or at the windows. The houses were hung with tapestry or ornamented with flowers to welcome the man who had come to save England from popish domination. Lady Peckham's house, in the principal street, by which the prince must pass to the lodgings assigned him, had its windows crowded with gazers, but one little balcony was reserved for Lady Peckham herself and her family; and not a few eyes turned from the crowds in the street to rest upon the stately figure of the widowed lady, supported by her two young cousins, both so lovely and in such different styles.

Peace of mind and improving health had brought the carnation to Paulina's cheek and the light to her dark eyes. Winifred was outwardly calm and pale as usual, but her mind was in a flutter of expectation of she knew not what. She told herself again and again that she had nothing to look for; that Lord Carew was and could be nothing to her; that she owed it to herself and to her lady

to think no more about him; but not the less did her heart bound every time the thought crossed her mind that she might perhaps see him again before she slept.

"Here they come at last!" said Lady Peckham. "I hear the music; and see, the crowd parts! Who comes first?"

First came a troop of gentlemen, many of them English, splendidly mounted, and attended by their negro servants in turbans and white feathers, rolling their eyes and showing their white teeth as though they considered the whole pageant had been got up for their exclusive honor.

Winifred gazed intently, but saw no face that she knew.

"What a pity Jack is not here!" said Paulina. "He might find some friends among all these black people. But who are these with the fur cloaks and black armor?"

"They must be the Swedes of whom we heard," said Lady Peckham. "They are indeed a formidable troop! Here comes the prince's banner Can you read the device, Winifred?"

"'The Protestant Religion and the Liberties of England!'" said Winifred. "I hope it may be

well; but I cannot help thinking of the poor, unhappy Duke of Monmouth."

"I do not wonder you think of him; but this is a very different matter," replied Lady Peckham. "Monmouth brought with him no such troops as these, and, besides, he had not a shadow of right or reason upon his side. The very proclamation he put forth was enough to have ruined his cause with all reasonable people. But look! Who comes here? The Prince of Orange himself!"

"How grave and thoughtful he looks!" observed Paulina. "One would not think he could ever smile."

"It is his nature to be grave, and even gloomy, and he has, besides, had much in his life to make him so," said Lady Peckham. "Moreover, his present enterprise is one which may well cause him to look grave. He has aged greatly since I saw him last, but he had always that austere and settled regard even as a young boy."

"See, see! What is that old dame about?" cried Winifred, as a very aged woman pressed through the crowd towards the prince. "Oh, Lady Peckham! it is Dame Oldmixon! Do you not remember her?"

"It is our old neighbor indeed! I fear she will

be trampled under foot," said Lady Peckham "But no, the crowd makes way for her! She touches the prince's hand! See, he speaks to her, and smiles! You see he can smile, Paulina, and very brightly too! Poor old dame, she is thinking of her son and husband!"

"What of them?" asked Paulina.

"The son was killed at Sedgemoor, and his father, though, I believe, perfectly innocent of any share in the rebellion, was put to death by Jeffreys Winifred, send some one to bring the poor old woman in, and give her some refreshment. She is not fit to be abroad in this press and crowd."

The messenger was sent, and returned: "She will not come, my lady. She sends her grateful duty to you, but says she will go home and die, now that she has seen the deliverer of England."

"We will find her out, and see that she is comfortably provided for," said Lady Peckham. "I heard that she had come to Exeter to live."

After the prince came a long train of infantry, mostly Swiss soldiers in the employ of the Dutch government, and then various bands, distinguished, as was the fashion of those times, by the names of their leaders.

"See there, Winifred!" said Lady Peckham,

suddenly. "Who is that gentleman with the fair hair and mustache—there on the black horse? See Alwright!"

"It is Master Arthur! It is my lord!" cried Alwright, in great excitement. "But how old he has grown, and what a great scar he has on his cheek!"

"That scar came from a Turkish sabre," said Lady Peckham. "Stop, he sees us! He waves his hat!"

Arthur's face was upturned, and his eyes were earnestly perusing the crowds of ladies in the windows and balconies. All at once he started, raised his hat, looked earnestly at the group in the balcony, and then waved his plumed hat once more, with a smile and gesture of triumph.

"Is that my cousin?" asked Paulina, in a tone of some disappointment. "I had thought him a much younger man. Did not you, Winifred?"

"He looks thin and very brown," said Winifred, commanding herself to speak; "but I do not think he has grown old so very much, considering all he has gone through."

"Why, did you ever see him before?" asked Paulina, curiously. "You never told me that! What an odd girl you are, Winifred!"

Winifred did not reply, and Lady Peckham answered for her.

Winifred knew my brother when she was a little girl. I hardly know whether he will recognize her!"

Winifred said nothing; but she could not help thinking that Arthur *had* recognized her, and that the wave of the hat and the smile were for her All the rest of the pageant passed before her eyes like a dream, and she was only glad when she could escape to her room, and be alone for awhile to collect her thoughts and compose herself. But she could not be spared long. She was wanted here, there, and everywhere; for the house was full of company, and Alwright in such a flurry and fever that, as she herself said, she did not know whether she was on her head or her heels. Winifred must set out the cakes and sweetmeats, see that every one was helped, assist the ladies to find their cloaks and hoods, and make herself generally useful. At last, the last guest departed, and Winifred, tired in body and wearied with excitement and hope deferred, returned to Lady Peckham's withdrawing-room. There was no one in the room, and Winifred dropped into a chair and covered her face with her hands.

"Oh, give me strength! Only give me strength!" was her prayer. "Let me know the truth, and give me grace to bear it, whatever it may be!"

The door opened, and Winifred started up, to be confronted face to face by a tall figure in a colonel's uniform. The two looked at each other for one moment. Then all uncertainty was at an end.

"Winifred, my own Winifred, you have not forgotten me in all these years that I have worn your piece of gold next my heart!"

Lady Peckham had heard her brother's step, and, hastening to meet him, had been just in time to see the greeting.

"Oho, Master Arthur!" said she to herself, with a smile, "you have found your young friend already, have you? Well, well, better Winifred than some others! But we shall see!"

"And so you have really come back again safe and sound, Master Arthur—I mean, my lord," said Alwright, "from the Turks and all! But you have got an ugly scar on your face!"

"Yes, a Turkish janizary spoiled my beauty for me," replied Arthur, laughing, "and came near doing worse; for he fired his pistol at me, and the ball struck me just here above my heart!"

"Goodness me!" exclaimed Alwright. "Why did he not kill you?"

"Through no good will of his, I assure you. I bore a charm in the shape of a certain piece of Moorish gold which hung round my neck by a chain and turned the ball!"

"Well!" said the sage Alwright, "say what you will, I shall always maintain that there is something in charms and amulets, and so I told my brother when he refused to wear the hare's foot I was at the pains to provide for his colic. 'Depend upon it,' said I, 'there is more in such things than you think!' I shall just tell him this story and see what he has to say. But where did you get your charm, Master Arthur—I mean, my lord?"

"Oh, that is a secret!" said Arthur, laughing. "If I should tell where it came from, the charm would be spoiled."

"To be sure, you ought not to tell," said Alwright. "I always did hear it would break the spell of such things, and you may need its help yet —who knows?"

"Who knows, indeed?" said Arthur. "I trust this same amulet of mine may yet bring me the greatest blessing of my life!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

ARTHUR'S stay in Exeter was short, but before he left he had sought a private interview with Winifred, and asked her to be his wife so soon as the troubles should be settled. "I have always kept this object in view, ever since we parted under the great pear-tree in your father's garden," said he. "I have been at foreign courts since then, and seen some of the most beautiful women in the world. I have been, too, in scenes of temptation and trial, among wild and dissolute men, and women still worse; but your face has always come between me and harm, and your piece of gold has indeed been a talisman which has kept me from many a sin. Winifred, will you be my wife? I can promise you no great wealth—no court gayeties. I am but a soldier, and my fortunes

will rise or fall with those of the Prince of Orange, my master. At best I shall be but a poor lord, living on my estate in Devonshire, where you may follow my good sister's example and play Lady Bountiful to tenants and cottagers; but if you are such as I think you, such a life will suit you better than fluttering at court or in the parks."

"Yes, indeed!" said Winifred, simply; "but what will my lady say? I am but a yeoman's daughter, you know. I can boast no gentle blood, save on the side of my mother, and I have no great fortune, which I have heard sometimes makes up for lack of long descent. I can do nothing against the will of my lady!"

"I believe my sister will make no objection," said Arthur. "I think she must see how the case stands. But, as you say, we owe a duty to her. She has been almost a mother to me, and more than a mother to you. We will do nothing without her. But the matter must be settled speedily, for the prince may move any day, and you wot, sweetheart, that when the master rides the man must run."

"Well, well!" said Mrs. Alwright at the conclusion of a private conference with her mistress, some days afterwards. "So this is the way it is to

turn out! I never would allow Mrs. Winifred to read novels or plays, but I don't see but I might just as well have done so, for I am sure nothing more romantic is to be found even in the tales of King Arthur. And so, all the time I was thinking perhaps he may take a fancy to his cousin Mrs. Paulina, he was making up to Mrs. Winifred! And all the time I was teaching Winifred to sit straight at her frame and keep her head well up and her chin under, and to speak and carry herself like a lady, I was teaching the future Lady Carew—which shows the importance of doing a thing well while one is about it," moralized Alwright, "as I shall make a point of telling Mrs. Paulina, who is apt to slight her work and not fasten her threads well. And so little Winifred Evans, the daughter of Magdalen Coffin, is to stand in my old lady's shoes and sit in her chair! Well well!"

"You think my mother would have been shocked," said Lady Peckham; "yet, as I was saying to myself, Winifred's birth and breeding are both above that of the woman to whom my mother would have married poor Edward. Do you remember when she came down to the Hall on a visit?"

"Aye, that I do!" said Alwright. "How she

bustled in her silks and satins, and talked loud, and took the words out of my lady's mouth at her own table, and wondered 'how anybody as was anybody could abear to live down in Devonshire among the savages.' I promise you it was a bitter pill for my lady, despite the gilding; though she would have swallowed it for all that, only the London lady took fright at poor Master Edward's strange ways—for he was strange even then. But little Winnie Evans! However, my lady is not here to object, and will know nothing about it, that is one comfort; and even if she does, 'tis to be hoped she has learned to see things differently by this time. And when is the wedding to be, my lady?"

"That we cannot say exactly. Much depends upon the movements of the prince. Should he be defeated after all, I suppose my brother will have to go abroad once more."

"But I trust he will not, my lady! So many gentlemen are joining him on every side. Here are Sir William Putman and Sir Francis Wane, and so many others flocking to him. Exeter is quite like a court, with the gentlemen and their servants. But what about the wedding clothes, my lady? Should not Mrs. Winifred's linen be got in hand?"

"O yes, whenever you please," said Lady Peckham, smiling. "As soon as things are a little more settled, I must write to my cousin Judith and tell her the news. It is but her due, after her kindness to Winifred, and I presume she will desire to do something towards her outfit. We must have them all here for the wedding, Alwright, whenever it takes place."

By the middle of February the English Revolution was a fixed fact, and William and Mary were settled upon the throne; but it was not till the primroses were blossoming in the green lanes of Devonshire that the wedding was celebrated in Exeter, and the new Lord and Lady Carew took possession of the gray old mansion house which had stood shut up and deserted so many years, all but the few rooms inhabited by the poor madman and his keepers. Winifred was in no hurry to leave her dear lady, and it was agreed on all sides to wait till such time as would be decorous for the young Corbets to put off their mourning. Great was the joy and exultation of good, kind-hearted Lady Corbet on the occasion. She had always known, she said, that Winifred was born for a great lady, and she was as pleased that she was as if it had been her own Paulina. It might be

Pall's turn next, perhaps; but the girl stuck up her nose, forsooth, and declared she would never marry. She would live with Cousin Margaret all her life, unless she was needed at home. She had no fancy at all for the men, had Pall, and the twins were far more excited about the wedding than their elder sister. Meantime half the seamstresses in Bristol were at work, under her direction, in fulfilling her vow that whenever Winifred married she should have a setting-out equal to that of any lady in the land; and marvellous indeed were the lace and fine linen, the cut-work and raised work, the brocades, and cambrics, and scented gloves, and gold-fringed gaiters, and clocked stockings, which Lady Corbet displayed to Alwright's admiring eyes on her arrival at Exeter a few days before the wedding. Sir John insisted upon adding to Winifred's little fortune the sum he had originally destined for her dowry, and presented besides a beautiful set of jewels. One other present Winifred had which cost her a fit of crying. It was from Doctor Mercer, and consisted of a case containing a beautiful and costly Bible and Prayer-book.

"Poor man, he is sad enough!" said Lady Corbet; "but he will not hear any one say a word

against you, for all that. When my cousin Norton began to say, one day, that doubtless you knew what you were about, that you had feathered your nest well, and got on the blind side of my lady, for all your saintliness—you know my cousin Norton never can abide any one who makes any profession of godliness—I think she feels it a reproach to herself, poor thing, for she does live like a heathen, and a sad grief it is to her mother-in-law, my Paulina's godmother. Well, when she said so, Doctor Mercer took her up, and I promise you he soon silenced her! I could wish sometimes that the doctor would take a fancy to Pall, but I doubt his ever marrying now."

The rest of our tale is soon told. Lord and Lady Carew lived on their estate in Devonshire, with little interruption, save when Arthur accompanied the king to Ireland in that memorable campaign which resulted in the Battle of the Boyne. Winifred was the same in prosperity that she had been in adversity—calm, brave, religious, trusting in God and walking daily and hourly with Him, doing good to all about her. She found a grandson of her old friend Dame Sprat living in great poverty on the outskirts of the estate, and had the happiness of placing him on the farm of

his grandfather, where he did credit to his descent and her patronage. She revived the village school, which had fallen to decay, and it continues to do good to this day, the girls of Lady Carew's school being in great request as house-servants and nursery-maids.

Lady Peckham retained her house in Exeter, but spent many months of every year with Winifred in the home of her childhood, where Alwright made saffron-cakes and almond pastys, imparted wonderful secrets of cooking and preserving to Lady Carew and her housekeeper, and had the pleasure of introducing little Mrs. Margaret and Mrs. Magdalen to the mysteries of cross-stitch and open-hem.

Paulina kept her word about remaining single, and living with cousin Margaret. Her first fancy, settled upon a most unworthy object, had been cruelly blighted, and she never had a second. After Lady Peckham's death, she inherited the house at Exeter, where she had always with her three or four motherless or orphan girls whom she brought up. Her little school became famous for the excellence and soundness of the education acquired under her charge, and she could have filled her house many times over, but she steadily refused to

take more than a certain number, and always gave the perference to those who had no mothers. She was effectually assisted by Alwright, who retained her faculties unimpared to a great age, and could teach cross-stitch and fine-darning by the aid of her glasses when she was ninety years old.

The twins often visited their sister and "cousin Winifred," as they delighted to call Lady Carew They grew up useful, well-educated women, and married well during the life-time of their mother, thus making up in some degree for Paulina's obstinate single-blessedness.

Nothing more was ever heard of Doctor Butler, and it was supposed that he went abroad. Doctor Mercer lived and died in Bristol, where he had many warm friends among both rich and poor, and won the respect of all, notwithstanding his heretical opinions upon the subject of fresh air and cold water. Sir John and Lady Corbet lived to see their great-grandchildren, and died respected and loved by their numerous descendants, and all who knew them. A wife was found for black Jack in a fine young negro girl brought from the West Indies; and that worthy blackamoor lived to be as white-headed as his old master.

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